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Update 4: Children at Home Program Transition, Implementation and Expansion Planning.

We continue to work hard to transition and expand the Children at Home Program.

Our intent is to be open and transparent in the transition, implementation and expansion phases and keep interested parties updated with progress.

I OH SO WISH I could report that everything on the paperwork side of things was signed, sealed and delivered. However, there is a lot of waiting to get things through all of the necessary steps to receive approval for contractors and create contracts for new programs. Things are taking a bit longer to move through the IDPH fiscal department than originally anticipated. I suppose as a taxpayer, it is good to know that they are very diligent and very thorough.

Until that process is completed VNS does not have the capability to move funds for payments to families or vendors. Progress IS being made and I continue to check in on the process daily. As soon as I have good news, I will share.

I kept waiting to send this update as I hoped if I waited just ONE MORE DAY we would have great news to report....so hopefully my next update will be VERY SOON!

In the interim of the update that everyone is waiting for, we have been receiving questions from the last update specifically about the 2 items on the list of categories of requests that will NOT be funded. The 2 items are the following:

Basic child items (non adaptive) clothes, shoes, school supplies, food
Basic living expenses (rent, water, utilities, heat/LP, etc.)

For some counties this is current protocol.
For some counties this will be a change in covered services.

In process of standardizing policies and procedures the intent of the project was evaluated. In drafting policies and procedures to move forward with, the focus was put on the intent of the project to direct funds towards services and supports for a child **as it relates to their disability**. These services and supports should enable the child to remain living in the family home.

As VNS reviews applications, they will be tasked with tying the request for funding to the child's disability. VNS Staff will be looking for the connection of the request to the child's disability and how it assists in the ability of the child to remain living in the family home. While basic child items such as clothes, shoes, school supplies, food are not covered, if there are adaptive needs then those items can be considered.

Example:

Basic Child Need: shoes (not approved as ALL children need shoes)

Adaptive Child Need: Specific shoes with a strong arch support for balance and support as requested by child's physical therapist. (Approved as it relates to the child's disability)

In staying true to the intent of the program, the project will target funds towards services and supports for children **as it relates to their disabilities**. The budget for this program has not been increased even though it intends to serve families from 76 additional counties. While this sounds like a daunting task, historically this program has been underspent (there were unspent funds each year). We intend to get ALL available funds out to families to serve children state wide. We do take caution in continuous monitoring the feasibility of our projected annual cap per child, better targeting of funds and expanded the service area.

It should also be noted that while Children at home funds can not be directed to basic living and child expenses, as a part of the Iowa Family Support Network's broader function, they will be able to help direct families to a wide range of resources to assist with basic living and child expenses.

Contractor Update (Visiting Nurse Services/VNS)

While, VNS staff is waiting for IDPH paperwork to be finalized, they have been moving forward. Once the contract has been finalized at IDPH, VNS will be ready to hit the ground running.

Annie Wood-Long and Tabby Kuehl provide CaH Project leadership at VNS.

Leo Esquivel will be joining the Children at Home team starting (today!!) Monday August 15th. In addition to be bilingual, Leo has experience with helping families find needed resources and areas of child development, understanding of Medicaid benefits and explaining those benefits to families. Welcome Leo!

VNS Staff continue to spend quite a bit of time with parents and interested parties on the phone fielding questions.

Transition information will be available just as soon as they have a finalized contract from IDPH and applications for funding will be accepted at that time for transition counties.

Program Update (Children at Home)

We have made progress in the areas of standardizing services and funds as the Children at Home Program moves forward and expands statewide.

Transition Process

Just as soon as VNS has the capability to pay families/vendors, they will begin transitioning families who have received CaH funds in the past.

Past contractors will be contacted and they will have the option of forwarding information on to VNS staff to expedite the application process for families.

If a past contractor certifies eligibility, eligibility will be assumed and the family can submit requests for funding without having to prove eligibility and supply supporting additional documentation of income, etc.

Families may also initiate the transition process and complete an application. If the family completes the application and a past contractor has not certified eligibility, they will need to provide supporting documentation for both disability and income.

Prior to October 1st applications will only be accepted from families that reside in one of the following counties: Blackhawk, Boone, Cass, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clinton, Crawford, Dubuque, Floyd, Grundy, Harrison, Jackson, Johnston, Keokuk, Mahaska, Mills, Mitchell, Monroe, Montgomery, Story, Wapello, Washington, Woodbury.

After October 1st, the program will roll out statewide and be open to residents of all Iowa counties.

Application

The application will have 4 basic parts.

Family demographics (child name, family info, address, etc)

Income info (additional documentation to be submitted to verify)

Certification of Disability Info (if child is on Waiver or SSI additional info is not needed, if not on Waiver or SSI then a professional needs to sign off to certify disability)

Application for funds (what the family is requesting, details on payment, justification of how expense ties to disability and assists in the ability for child to remain in the home and provider sign off)

Advisory Committee

The Children at Home Advisory Committee will help to steer program policy and spread awareness about the services available through the Children at Home Program. The Advisory group will meet quarterly in November, February, May, and August.

If you would like to serve on the Children at Home Advisory Committee, please contact Tabby Kuehl at TabbyK@vnsia.org or 515-558-6228 and she will send you details and an application.

Applications for membership are due in September 30, 2016. Newly selected members will be notified in early October in order to participate in the November CaH meeting/orientation.

A Few Notes for Take Away Messaging:

Applications are NOT being accepted at this time. We will send an update out just as soon as the process is in place to do so. I hope this changes REALLY soon!

While applications are not yet being accepted, there has been a TON of planning happening at the program level. Once the contract is finalized the transition process should be set and ready to go.

Prior to October 1st Applications will only be accepted from participants from 2015-2016 eligible counties. (Blackhawk, Boone, Cass, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clinton, Crawford, Dubuque, Floyd, Grundy, Harrison, Jackson, Johnston, Keokuk, Mahaska, Mills, Mitchell, Monroe, Montgomery, Story, Wapello, Washington, Woodbury)

On October 1st applications will be accepted for all 99 counties.

Initially, VNS will be able to approve up to \$700.00 of eligible requests per child per year. This may be adjusted (increased or decreased) as we monitor spending trends.

We are working to create a program that will be available, equitable and sustainable for eligible families statewide.

FAQ

Both VNS and I have been receiving lots of questions about:

- Applications that were in process but were not completed with previous contractors.
- Expenses that have already been incurred for the months of July and August that families/vendors believed would be covered under Children at Home Program.

We have built flexibility in to the transition process.

Families who have applications in "limbo" or have incurred expenses for the Month of July and August are encouraged to communicate with VNS staff. (Tabby Kuehl at TabbyK@vnsia.org or 515-558-6228)

Again, we are more than happy to receive feedback as we move forward.

You can do that via the comment link on the IPDH website (<https://www.idph.iowa.gov/family-health/family-support>) or by sending me an email. Past updates are also posted at this site for your review.

Thanks again for you interest in the program.

If you would like to be removed from this update list please send me an email and I will take your contact information off updates.

Kelly

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