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Update 2: Children at Home Program Transition, Implementation and Expansion Planning.

July is here and 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.

We have developed a very basic transition and expansion timeline to share. We believe this to be thoughtful, rigorous, and realistic.

I should note that we tried to address concerns with gap of services to allow current participants the ability to submit requests for expenses in July, August, and September prior to expanding the program statewide October 1st. Also eligibility will be assumed for current participants allowing for expedited processing of these requests.

### **Transition Timeline**

#### **July**

Month of July will be used for internal planning at both the Department and Contractor level.

Contracts need to be fully executed in order for funds to be transferred from one agency to another.

VNS will be developing the application and what documentation is needed to transfer a current participant.

IDPH will be standardizing program guidelines, policies and procedures.

#### **August and September**

The first phase of implementation will be to transition existing participants to the new contractor.

In order for this to happen 2015-2016 contractors will need to obtain appropriate releases from the family and then forward eligibility and transition information to the new contractor (VNS).

Transfer process will be available to 2015-2016 contractors and families for the time period of August 1st- September 30th.

Families should be transferred during this timeframe even if there are no pending fund requests.

After October 1st, all applications will require both eligibility determination and application approval.

The new Contractor (VNS) will honor eligibility determination (with required information from previous contractor) for 1 year. Eligibility for all participants will be determined on an annual basis.

Families will need to complete the request for funding application for any requests the time period of July 1st – September 30th by October 1st.

This hopefully will limit the gap in services for current participants and give the contractor (VNS) a soft start to pilot and work out any kinks in their payment process.

**It is important to note that while the eligibility requirements for participation the program will not change, current participants may find a change in covered items or the amount of funds available as parameters and guidance for the program are standardized for statewide implementation.** I want to be diligent in again noting that the Children at Home program was operated VERY differently across contractors in the past. One of our first tasks is to standardize the program for statewide access. It will be possible for VNS to pay expenses with appropriate documentation for July- September. With that being said, Current participants should NOT ASSUME that all items that were covered in the past will continue to be covered or that there will be the same cap for funding. For example, the cap for funding varied between \$400 - \$1,400 / child per fiscal year between 2015-2016 contractors. I would hate for a family who was served by an entity at the high end of allocations to assume they had the same amount of money to spend and then be in a tough spot when the standardized guidelines come out with a different allocation. On the upside, it will also likely be the scenario that some participants will find their funding cap

has increased and they will have access to a higher amount of funds than in years past. We plan to move swiftly to standardize procedures so participants will have updated information as they make spending decisions.

After October 1st, requests for funding cannot be for items already purchased or services already rendered. Requests for funding will need to be submitted prior to purchase or provision. Detailed guidance for requests will be developed and made available to current participants as well as expansion participants.

### **October**

Expansion roll out. Program should be fully operational.

### **A Few Notes for Take Away Messaging:**

Applications are NOT being accepted at this time.  
(VNS is working hard to create the eligibility and application process!)  
We will send an update out just as soon as the process is in place to do so.

Prior to October 1st Applications will only be accepted from participants from 2015-2016 eligible counties.

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

The process is not a simple transfer of a single program from one contractor to another. Because the program was operating so differently in existing counties, we are essentially creating a new program using the same eligibility stipulations and a combination of current practice from multiple 2015-2016 contractors.

We are working to create a program that will be equitable and sustainable for families statewide. While we agree with many of you that it would have been ideal to have overlap in contracts, that was not an available option.

### **FAQ**

I have received feedback about this being an especially tough time of year to make the switch. Sometimes having the reasoning behind certain frustrations can be helpful.  
The reason for timeline: the current state fiscal year ends (June 30th) and the new one begins (July 1st).  
July 1- June 30th is a very typical contract cycle for state agencies.

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.

Thanks again for your interest in the program. I hope you find these updates informative and helpful.  
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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