Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

1716 San Antonio Street, Austin, TX 78701
(512) 478-3366 | www.TXDisabilities.org

Summary Recommendations for People in Long Term Services and Supports in the COVID-19 Pandemic

To Senate Health & Human Services Committee, Dec. 8, 2020

HCS group homes:

1. Support provider base in HCS group homes with retainer payments when residents are on therapeutic leave.
2. Residents should be approved quickly for therapeutic leave. Currently, this can take significant time and leave the provider at risk for revenue losses and/or recoupments.
3. In-home day habilitation did not work well as structured. Need to look at something else and/or make changes.

Communications:

1. Advanced notice when possible. Avoid last-minute changes/extensions/uncertainty.

Changes in policy and practice that should be made permanent:

1. Expanded access to telehealth
    a. Include access to therapies
    b. Consider other possibilities, ex.: teledentistry
2. Extended service authorizations and prescriptions for those in stable health.

Changes in policy and practice that should remain implemented during the current pandemic and "on hold" for implementation in future situations:

1. "Hazard pay" increases for direct care workers, particularly the lowest-paid.
2. Engagement with advocacy groups and providers by policymakers and HHSC staff.

Community long term services and supports, other than group homes:

1. Ensure that community attendants are included in the vaccine priority populations with other direct health care workers. For attendants working in the agency model and the consumer directed services option.
2. Include community attendants in "hazard pay" increases for retention. For attendants working in the agency model and the consumer directed services option.
3. Attendants working in the consumer directed services option present a different distrubition challenge for PPE. Supply these attendants with vouchers that can be used to purchase PPE.

From an SSLC family: I thought you would like to see this comment from a long conversation with an SSLC family member. "I am by far the best at interpeting what my daughter is communicating. She has not been successsful in using an iPad or FaceTime, as some have been able to do. I recognize the difficult situation for the SSLC, but does interaction protocol have to be one size fits all? I believe a safe interaction could be allowed, case by case. This would help my daughter control her anxiety."

CTD is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with Federal Tax ID #74-2071160. CTD is a social and economic impact organization benefitting Texans with all disabilities of all ages. CTD is a membership organization controlled by people with disabilities. Your contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.