



8325 Lenexa Drive
Lenexa, KS 66214

Thank you for the opportunity to share information regarding our approach to the workforce shortage. My name is Nanette Perrin. I am the Senior Director of Social Determinants of Health and Pathways for Sunflower Health Plan. Sunflowers Pathways team coordinates transitions of care for members from nursing facilities.

Since April of 2020, Sunflower has been hosting a bi-weekly LTSS stakeholder meeting to discuss issues related to the pandemic. This collaborative includes representatives of KDADS and the other MCOs, Nursing Facility Association members, InterHab, several IDD providers and Community Developmental Disability Organizations, as well as other HCBS providers and member advocacy organizations. Through this meeting, and through communications with our provider representatives and care coordinators, we are aware of the increasing barriers to members aging in place. Last week we discussed the direct care workforce database here in Kansas and potential strategies to better leverage that resource. At our next meeting we are going to have the FMS providers come and discuss how we can better support members who self-direct with knowing the qualified workers available to work.

Before the pandemic and even more since we have focused on 3 different areas of innovation for our aging population: Social isolation, Chronic Disease Management, and Direct Care Workforce.

The direct caregiver workforce issue is impacting services across all HCBS programs, including both agency and self-directed services, and assisted living and nursing facilities. We all have known, even prior to the pandemic, that there is a growing shortage of direct caregivers in comparison to the number of people needing care. The pandemic has exacerbated the need for solutions.

We have been focusing on innovation across 3 different areas: Social isolation, Chronic Disease Management, and Direct Care Workforce. For today I will focus on the Direct Care Workforce area.

- **Direct Care Workforce:**

- **Emergency Backup Pilot:** Last year we collaborated with the National Centers for Independent Living and completed an Emergency Backup Plan for direct care workers. Centene also worked with a national advocate to review and provide best practice recommendations on development of effective backup plans.
- **Expanding Uses of Technology:** We are working with two in-state providers and one out-of-state provider that offer a combination of smart home technology and 24/7 remote monitoring to support individuals in their homes/communities. We are collaborating on how they can partner with us to offer technology solutions at both the provider and at the member level. We are currently determining the pilot we can engage in to determine and report the outcomes that can be achieved. Expanded use of technology within HCBS waiver programs will also potentially help "free up" caregivers who then can be hired to work with persons who need in-person care.
- **Family Caregivers:** During the emergency order, we have had expanded flexibility to approve for family members and guardians to be paid. We have received Initial, high-level feedback within our LTSS stakeholder meetings about the potential value of continuing some or all of the flexibility to expand the pool of persons who can be paid to provide care. A suggestion was also made to evaluate the option of offering a flexible subsidy to natural support family caregivers who do not

1-877-644-4623

TDD/TTY 1-888-282-6428

SunflowerHealthPlan.com

receive other pay. We plan to continue working with stakeholders to evaluate the need for future flexibility, with appropriate guardrails, and to make recommendations to KDADS.

- **Shared Living:** Sunflower has been supporting a workgroup to propose strategies for utilization of Shared Living.
- **Self Direction:** Sunflower saw a slight increase in the percentage of members who self-direct their personal care services since the beginning of COVID.
- **Visions and Person Centered Thinking:** All of our care coordinators go through courses in Person Centered Thinking as well as our Visions for an Integrated Life. The Person Centered Thinking Course provides tools they can utilize within the community including family & friends, both paid and unpaid supports. Those tools help identify those strengths and strategies to support them.

In 2020, Centene also purchased a platform for ADvancing States for matching caregivers to jobs, and for providers to use to manage workforce needs. ADvancing States is the national association of State Aging & Disability agencies. Currently, 7 state agencies are using the platform, which is called Connect To Care Jobs. ADvancing States is in the process of making improvements to the platform and plans to offer it to more states before the end of this year.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this information. I'm happy to answer any questions you have.