

ELNH Network Meeting - April 10, 2008

Present:

Julie Sackett	Lakes Region Child Care Services
Jackie Cowell	ELNH
Ellen Wheatley	DHHS/DCYF/Child Development Bureau
Anne Grassie	Dover Children's Center and PEEL (Partners in Effective Early Learning)
Carol Garhart	Holy Cross Early Childhood Center
Chris Casserly	Rochester Child Care Center
Katie Brissette	ELNH
Sam Clark	ELNH
Barbara Loughran	Franconia Child Care Center; ELNH Advisory Board
Jim Doremus	White Birch Community Center
Dawn Collins	Somersworth Early Learning Center
Annette Hope-Ross	Great Bay Kids Co., Inc.
Nancy Coville	Bearcamp Valley School & Child Care
Susan Whiting	Wolfeboro Area Children's Center
Amy Chapman	Honey Hill Child Care, Dover
Janet Clement	CCR&R Coordinator, Strafford
Samantha Clark	ELNH

Meeting started late, so that a group from ELNH could go to the State House to show support for SB 540.

Legislative Report –

- SB540 – to help small businesses better afford health insurance – NH Citizen's Health initiative come up with SB540, called NH HealthFirst. Insurance companies would be required to offer the coverage that includes wellness components, to employers with 1-50 employees. Expected to reduce premiums by 15-19%. A group went from ELNH to sign and show support for the bill. Some Chambers of Commerce don't like it and health insurers are not in favor of it, but the Dept of insurance is in favor. This is a step toward addressing the issue of health care costs and health insurance deficiencies in the state.
- New tagline for ELNH "When Child Care Works, NH Works" -
- SB325 - stop-gap plan for state scholarship rate restructure – to go into effect 7/08, and the redesign is intended to go into effect in 7/09. Rate sheet is very likely to go through and be approved for 7/08 as is currently is (handed out at the meeting). Federal government told NH in 8/07 that our rate sheet is out of compliance – CDB had to change it by 3/08 to be effective by 9/08. State of NH has been very supportive of the changes developed thus far. New rate sheet no longer shows a separate rate for contract centers. Licensed and License Exempt rates only, plus a service fee for contract centers. The expected co-pay is the same, regardless of Licensed or License Exempt child care. No rate reductions on any position on the rate schedule. Expected family co-pay is \$32 based on income. Programs will still have the authority to charge a different rate, up to the difference between state scholarship and private rates. Very unlikely to negatively impact families. Redesign process of looking at the system more comprehensively is underway, and is anticipated to be ready for implementation 7/09.

Redesign –

Overview of the process for addressing this at ELNH network meetings

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Input questions:

Barriers for families' eligibility

- difficult to get someone at CAP for info on Step 4
- Step 4 calculation is done differently
- Switching between Step 3 and 4
- Changed the way they pay in 1/08
- Local DO not accessible - need later hours, won't give out info to the cc provider, need relationship-building, case management. Be mindful of the geography of the areas where the DO is a long distance to get to. Stories of families' experiences were shared and Ellen Wheatley noted that DFA and DHHS are dedicated to family respectful and responsive Dos – please let commissioners know when that doesn't happen.
- Recertification process – can non-contract programs be notified when recert is imminent? Getting documentation is a significant challenge
- Repeat requests of employers for the same documentation
- Confusion about when/what to report, and to whom, when there are multiple eligibility processes in contract center and DO
- Could there be info sharing – a waiver to release info or allow designated person/people to speak to the case worker, or get info on the case?
- Case should not be closed retroactively – if this happens contact DHHS (contact info to follow from ELNH)

How are families who qualify for assistance coming to your program?

- Some referrals from NHEP, or from other families receiving services, some have been to the DO, others may be walk-ins with no info, sometimes in crisis

Ellen acknowledged that a Family Handbook of information is needed, as well as a provider handbook

Provider approval and enrollment policies and processes

- Issues that create barriers for providers – provider waiting a long time for a resource ID number
- Are there providers who want to provide service to low-income families, but don't know how? No feedback.
- How can DHHS help providers be better informed about child care scholarship?
 - o New director application could flag information on state scholarship to that program
 - o More frequent trainings
 - o Care allowance for working person, when there is another adult in the household, but that person is disabled and unable to care for the child
 - o Periodic general training
 - o Billing and payment training – currently exists, but not many know about it
 - o Eligibility training needed
 - o Clear eligibility in terms of who is counted in the household – different for different programs – different qualification criteria for different programs
 - o Trainings for center staff with DO staff together
 - o Some verification that the family does not owe a balance to one program (or multiple programs) before being open in another. Ellen shared that in Kansas, if a family changes providers, they are asked why, and if the family changes again, they won't pay until both previous programs are confirmed paid.

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Redesign team will put out info monthly, on decisions made about the redesign.

Old System:

Provider Type categories: Licensed, License Exempt

Age categories: Under 3, Over 3

New System:

Provider Type categories: Licensed Center, Licensed Home; License Exempt Home, License Exempt Center

Age categories: Infant-18 mos., 18-36 mos., PreK-6 ½ yrs., 6 ½ yrs. – 13th Bday

Ellen's visual aid -

\$3732 is the average cost per child in the current system – any increase in cost per child will lead to a wait list

Rates – intend to move more toward market rate base for rates

Units – change to 3 levels: 15 hours, 16-30 hours, 31+ hours (12 hour minimum payment)

Absentee Days – payment will be made for regular closings, payment made more on a full-time equivalent basis – easier to predict revenues

Disability - \$4 is not very helpful – will increase to \$10 per day per child, but not yet sure how that money would come to the provider

Wait List – substantial wait list result from above changes

Looking at ways to make adjustments on eligibility and co-pays, in order to make up some money and reduce projected wait list.

Positive aspects of wait list:

- having a wait list can encourage families to be more vigilant and responsible about providing docs, etc.
- a wait list would provide a clear gauge of the need
- advocacy opportunity

Licensing forums – schedule handed out at the meeting, by email, and on the DHHS website. These are forums for feedback before public hearings – please attend to provide feedback on licensing changes

ELNH Website toolbox – Katie will email a list of proposed topics for inclusion on the website. Please provide feedback on what is helpful and what else is needed.

Next meeting Thursday, May 8

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Sackett
April 10, 2008