

# Coordinating Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports for Individuals with Complex Behavioral Health Conditions

Given the significant role that Medicaid plays in the financing and delivery of long-term services and supports (LTSS), states are focused on improving the delivery of LTSS in ways that help Medicaid beneficiaries remain in their homes, live independently, and engage meaningfully in their communities. Managed care organizations (MCOs) are valuable partners to states as they seek to achieve these goals. More and more, states are moving to managed LTSS (MLTSS) arrangements in Medicaid.

## MLTSS Can Help Address Barriers in the Fee-for-Service System

Under Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS), LTSS are often delivered in a “silo”—separate from physical and behavioral health services—which can result in a fragmented and uncoordinated system of care rather than a person-centered model of care delivery. The fragmentation in the FFS system also limits beneficiaries’ ability to access the full array of services needed to support community inclusion.

Individuals with complex behavioral health conditions experience high rates of homelessness, social isolation and incarceration—all factors that emphasize the importance of collaboration and coordination of services and supports for behavioral health, physical health, and LTSS. Additionally, individuals with complex behavioral health conditions often need lifelong, recovery-oriented supports to fully engage in their communities (e.g., housing, employment supports). Insufficient access to these services is sometimes due to a lack of coordination and the inflexible nature of services that can be delivered under FFS.

MLTSS can improve access to home and community-based services for beneficiaries, aid providers in coordinating across physical health, behavioral health and LTSS systems, and support states’ goals to serve Medicaid beneficiaries with high-quality care under budgetary constraints.

## Managed Care Improves the Experience of Individuals Using LTSS

Through a well-designed managed care approach, MCOs are able to enhance the delivery of coordinated, high-quality services and supports that help individuals achieve their goals. MLTSS adds value in a variety of ways.

**Integrates LTSS with the Broader Array of Physical and Behavioral Health Services.** MCOs employ a holistic approach that addresses an individual’s multifaceted needs—crossing the traditional “silos” of physical health, behavioral health, and LTSS. Addressing the needs of an individual with complex behavioral health conditions in a comprehensive manner can improve quality of care, enhance health outcomes, and promote community engagement while reducing utilization of high cost institutional settings. For those individuals who can be safely transitioned to living in the community, these moves yield significant improvements in quality of life and more cost effective care.

**Enhances Community Integration for Individuals with Complex Behavioral Health Conditions.** By coordinating all benefits through a single entry point, MCOs are well-positioned to reduce fragmentation and inappropriate utilization of institutional settings of care. Achieving true community participation, social inclusion, and resiliency and recovery for individuals with complex behavioral health conditions requires coordinating with community supports that may not be directly covered by Medicaid. In particular, these individuals often need access to housing, employment or educational services, non-medical transportation, as well as faith-



### Complex behavioral health conditions

can include serious mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depressive disorder) or other mental health conditions, with or without co-occurring substance use disorders that, individually or in combination, have an impact on one or more functional abilities. In 2014, an estimated 9.8 million adults (age 18 and older) had a mental health condition that significantly impaired function.<sup>1</sup> Functional limitations can impede an individual’s ability to live independently at home and engage in the community.

## Finding Comprehensive Solutions

### Supporting Recovery through MLTSS

MCOs offering MLTSS can play an important role in helping individuals with complex behavioral health conditions achieve all four dimensions of recovery (i.e., health, home, purpose and community); promoting resiliency; and fostering hope. Through an integrated, collaborative and coordinated approach, MCOs put structures in place and make available resources and supports that help individuals to live independently, direct their own care and services, and achieve recovery. For example, an MCO member who had several recent hospitalizations was engaged with a community mental health center but was also eligible for other services that he was not receiving. His Amerigroup Kansas plan care coordinator identified the additional services for which he was eligible and coordinated with the community mental health center and the state agency to ensure he could choose from the services that would be most beneficial for his recovery.<sup>2</sup> Included in his supports, the member spends five hours each weekday with his respite worker participating in community and recreational activities of his choice. The member has been able to remain at home without further hospitalizations and is building a life for himself in the community.

based and social supports. MCOs have the flexibility to go beyond certain FFS limitations to coordinate across these resources, build collaborative relationships with community organizations, and execute the most effective approach to achieving each individual's person-centered plan goals.

**Achieves Better Outcomes for Members.** MCOs promote consumer choice, self-direction, community integration, independent living, resiliency and recovery. In doing so, MCOs can bring best and most promising practices to MLTSS programs, including technologies that support the member and their caregiver as well as support independence and safety in the home (e.g., medication reminders, electronic planners, mobile applications to self-monitor and track behavior changes, and other assistive technology). Further, MCOs can provide enhanced supports for parents, family members and other informal caregivers, including respite services, education and training. The result can be enhanced member engagement, improved adherence, and higher member satisfaction.

**Provides an Accountable Structure for the Delivery of High-Value LTSS.** MCOs are valuable partners to states as they seek to improve the delivery of LTSS. MCOs have the ability to reach beyond Medicaid-covered services to better address social determinants of health and support community integration. MCOs can also facilitate innovation and accountability in LTSS provider networks through flexible approaches to reimbursement and value-based purchasing. Overall, MCOs create a point of accountability for both members and states seeking improvements in service quality and consumer satisfaction.

## Delivering on the Promise of MLTSS for Individuals with Complex Behavioral Health Conditions

As more states move in the direction of fully integrated managed care for all health care, services and supports, including LTSS, several recommendations can guide their efforts:

- Create flexibility in program design to meet individual needs and preferences: MCOs must meet members where they are, understand their goals, and work with them to achieve those goals.
- Engage the broad range of stakeholders: A successful MLTSS program depends on the development of strong and trusted relationships with advocates, providers, and others.
- Provide administrative and program value to states: MCOs should support individuals, families and caregivers, and states' goals.

The comprehensive and integrated approach of MLTSS allows coordination across the full array of services and supports that an individual needs, promotes access to HCBS, and enhances the quality of care and services delivered. MCOs are well-positioned to support states and their Medicaid beneficiaries in achieving the vision of a person-centered LTSS delivery system that emphasizes independence, choice, and overall well-being of the member.

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*For more information, please see our complete paper on managed LTSS at <http://antheppublicpolicyinstitute.com>*

<sup>1</sup> SAMHSA (2015). Behavioral Health Barometer: United States, 2015. Available at: [http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/2015\\_National\\_Barometer.pdf](http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/2015_National_Barometer.pdf) (Accessed March 15, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Program information from the Amerigroup health plan in Kansas.