Managing Our Future

By Jake Jacobs
Executive Director

Managed Medicaid for the people eitas serves – persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is seriously being discussed in Missouri. This is setting off alarm bells throughout the State, because this could mean massive changes to the systems that have been in place for decades to support and protect those individuals.

So why be alarmed about Managed Care? Missouri has had some form of Medicaid Managed care for more than 30 years. Most persons eligible for Medicaid in Missouri are required to enroll in a managed care plan for acute care, primary, specialty and behavioral health services. The current system is used to help manage access, quality and cost of Medicaid Services. Rather than contracting directly with providers, Missouri contracts with managed care plans to arrange and deliver Medicaid services. In most instances rather than paying for units of service, managed care plans pay a set amount each month for each enrolled member.

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New Happenings

Something must be in the water lately.

It seems nearly every week we’ve had changes - really amazing stuff - happening all around eitas. The first big happening was in October 2018 when we officially launched our new branding and website.

The new branding means a new logo and new styling on all materials coming from this agency. The new logo brings joyful, soothing colors and the whimsical play on individuality within the “e” of the eitas wording. It perfectly expresses our committment.

In the front lobby of the eitas Administration Building you will be greeted with a large, new sign over the reception desk. The lobby also now

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New Board Members

We welcome three new members to the eitas Board of Directors.

Angela Segovia, of Blue Springs, is a Chiropractic Teaching Fellow at Cleveland University - Kansas City. Ms. Segovia was a past support coordinator for eitas. She is the mother of Zach, who has Autism and Williams Syndrome.

Susan Borgmeyer, of Kansas City, is a retired teacher who has taught in Missouri public schools for over 30 years. She also has taught in a state school for the severely disabled. Additionally, Ms. Borgmeyer has

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to cover what they need. This typically works well for most Medicaid enrollees to handle routine sickness, curable diseases, and controllable conditions like diabetes and heart disease. But such a system has never been used in Missouri to deliver services to people with intellectual and developmental disability services. Why?

Because persons with developmental disabilities are not ill; they do not have an easily cured cold or treatable condition that will go away with medication or treatments. They need long term care and supports just to stay alive and attempt to live as typical a life as they can with their family and in their community.

These long-term services and supports include, but are not limited to, residential services, adult day programs, home health aide services, personal care services, transportation, supported employment, and case management services that were specially developed to assist those with complex disabilities and are funded through special Medicaid waivers. They are not the usual services that Medicaid provides to persons without disabilities.

But one problem with waivered services is that they are expensive when compared with routine Medicaid medical care. Persons with disabilities comprise 14 percent of those eligible for Medicaid, but account for 40 percent of the expenses. This is obviously a concern as we see costs for all medical care rising astronomically. State legislators have a dilemma and a difficult responsibility in how to control rising costs yet deliver good care, especially to those with disabilities.

For decades these waivered IDD services have been managed and funded through the Department of Mental Health and Mo Healthnet through a combination of state general revenue funds and Federal Medicaid dollars. It is in every essence a managed care system now. It just may not be the most effective and efficient system it could be. But that can change. We can improve on the system we already have without bringing in a managed care company that would reduce vital funds available for services and place new restrictions on services and supports.

States that have allowed Managed Care companies to take over the typical waivered services of long-term care and supports have experienced a lot of problems around delivering adequate and timely services to persons. Typical Managed Care organizations exist to make a profit. They promise a state many things: they will reduce costs, save money, increase access to services, increase choice and provide better quality care. Sometimes those happen, but most often they do not. Many time costs have risen, waitlists grow, and even people have died from lack of needed services.

I would urge our Missouri legislators to rethink the structure and management of our current system. Utilize the expertise we already have on a statewide and local level to streamline processes, develop affordable outcomes, and revise the unnecessary and burdensome system to one that is more effective and efficient. Develop a task force composed of legislators and officials from DMH, Mo Healthnet, and the provider safety nets to revamp and redesign the good system we have to make it even better, without the chaos and deficits that managed care can cause.
I supported a young man named John for four years as a support coordinator at eitas.

John has the strength of a linebacker and during one of my first interactions with John, his direct care staff warned me not to get too close to him or he may grab me or pull my hair out. Although it was subconscious, I kept myself at a distance from John. However, the more I got to know John and spend time with him, my guard came down and I found myself holding John’s hand, rubbing his head and letting him touch my head as well.

Using my knowledge of Gentle Teaching, I let any fear of John’s past aggressions disappear, and was met with only kindness and unconditional love in return. By shifting my perspective, I was able to have an awesome, meaningful relationship with John.

When I went to visit John each month, his direct care staff sometimes stared in wonder at our interactions. After several months, I saw a change in their closeness to John, and most of his staff began showing him the affection that he so desperately craved. John could sense if staff was scared to be near him, and his aggression was how he communicated he didn’t feel safe and loved.

Gentle Teaching has taught me to be a better advocate for others, a better mother to my two strong-willed toddlers and a better human being, as it has taught me to understand that there is a deeper meaning behind the way people respond to certain situations.

If I have a disagreement with someone or a stranger shows me rudeness I stop and remind myself that I don’t know what that person has been through and to just show them grace.

By Sarah Vallandingham
Agency Relations Specialist

What Gentle Teaching Means to Me

By Sarah Vallandingham
Agency Relations Specialist

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2019 Annual Awards Presentation and Dinner

Tuesday, May 21, 2019
The North Club at Arrowhead Stadium

Registration begins at 5 p.m.
Program begins at 6 p.m.
RSVP by May 6 to Sylvia Greene at 816.363.2000 or email sgreene@eitas.org.

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www.eitas.org/training
Movie Screening for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

On March 21, eitas held its first movie screening with the showing of “Intelligent Lives” at Trivoli Cinemas in Westport. The screening was in celebration of Developmental Disability Awareness Month.

“Intelligent Lives” is a 70-minute documentary from award-winning filmmaker Dan Habib that stars three pioneering young American adults with intellectual disabilities – Micah, Naieer and Naomie – who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college and the workforce.

Academy Award-winning actor and narrator Chris Cooper, who also happens to be a Kansas City native, contextualizes the lives of these central characters through the emotional personal story of his son Jesse, as the film unpacks the shameful and ongoing track record of intelligence testing in the U.S.

“Intelligent Lives” challenges what it means to be intelligent, and points to a future in which people of all abilities can fully participate in higher education, meaningful employment and intimate relationships.

The film is a catalyst to transform the label of intellectual disability from a life sentence of isolation into a life of possibility for the most systematically segregated people in America.

After the showing, eitas Executive Director Jake Jacobs took questions from the audience, and he provided interesting facts about eitas and about developmental disabilities in the United States.

After this successful screening, eitas is looking toward possibly providing more in the future. Stay tuned.
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has a television monitor that plays constant eitas updates - and also provides some non-eitas info such as news and weather.

In October, we launched our redesigned website at eitas.org. The website is easier for browsing and it includes some really neat features such as online training registration, event calendars, news and videos.

Make sure and take a moment to see all the great things happening around eitas.

New Board Members continued from Pg. 1

been special education compliance consultant and assistant director for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - Office of Special Education. For the last seven years she has worked as a special education compliance consultant for the Regional Professional Development Center, UMKC.

Ed Van Haele, of Buckner, worked in sales and marketing at the time of this retirement. Previously, he was the store director for Safeway Stores Inc. Mr. Van Haele said he joined the board to have an impact on the services provided to the special needs population. He is the father of a special needs adult.

We welcome our new board members, and we look forward to our future together!
Propel: A New Eitas Provider Program

Since Fall 2015, University of Missouri-Kansas City’s Propel Program has provided an inclusive postsecondary education for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Jackson County.

Propel’s program focuses on basic academics and employment skills and offers a pre-college program for metro-area high school sophomores and juniors with disabilities, called Bridge to College. Propel’s mission is to prepare students with IDD to live more independently and fully in the community. Propel’s goal is for students to graduate with a two-year certificate, have a minimum of three work-based learning experiences, be competitively employed, and be prepared to live independently.

Propel is a two-year, full time program. Many students live on campus, residing in dorms among students with all abilities and attend classes with non-Propel, undergraduate students 75 percent of the time. In addition to full-time coursework, students participate in other student activities, organizations and community programs. eitas provides funding for additional staff advising hours for Jackson County students. Students work with their staff advisor who has a key role in supporting students on their person-centered plans by providing guidance and empowering students through their course of study and employment experiences.

Propel serves students who range from 18-25 years of age with the following diagnoses: autism spectrum disorder, down syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder and Intellectual Developmental Disability. Propel’s staff include 11 peer mentors, two graduate students, four student resident assistants, and faculty to teach classes. Propel also partners with Literacy KC’s AmeriCorps Vista project to provide paid jobs over the summer as well as hosting two yearlong propel VISTA employees, both who have disabilities, who are role models for Propel students.

eitas is excited to be partnering with an innovative program with a primary emphasis on self-determination and employment for young adults.

Legislative Update

HB 205 (Kelley)
This bill requires insurance companies to cover two hearing aids (one for each ear) every thirty-six months. Audiological exams, selection, fitting, adjustment, and repairs will be covered if deemed medically necessary. Status: 1/10/19 Second Read

HB 222 (Kelley)
This bill instructs the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to establish a hearing aid distribution program for Missourians in need of hearing aid and whose income is at or below the federal poverty level. Status: 1/10/19 Second Read

SB 101 (Riddle)
This act requires the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to establish, subject to appropriations, a statewide hearing aid distribution program to provide financial assistance to certain low-income individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to obtain hearing aids. Status: 3/27/2019 Referred To Committee

HB 61 (Unsicker)
Repeals a provision relating to waivers by blind employees. This bill repeals a section of statute
making it legal for employees who are blind to waive their rights to personal injury compensation if the employee’s blindness directly caused or contributed to causing the injury. Status: 1/10/19 Second Read

**HB 517 (Unsicker)**
This act requires all state agencies providing employment services or services and supports to individuals with disabilities to implement an employment first policy by considering competitive, integrated employment as the first priority and preferred outcome. Status: 1/10/19 Second Read

**SB 233 (Sater)**
Under current law, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education pays monthly to each sheltered workshop a sum equal to the amount calculated under statute, but at least the amount necessary to ensure that at least $21 is paid for each six hour or longer day worked by a employee with a disability. Status: 3/6/2019 Voted Do Pass

**SB 28 (Hegeman)**
Places a cap on the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. This act places an aggregate cap on the amount of state low-income housing tax credits that may be authorized in a calendar year. Such cap shall be fifty percent of the amount of federal low-income housing tax credits allocated to the state. Status: 2/26/2019 Second Read

**HB 308 (Walker)**
Establishes the Mo HealthNet Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities Program. The Ticket to Work Health Assurance Program provides medical assistance through MO HealthNet for employed, disabled persons who meet certain qualifications, including asset limits and earned, net, and gross income calculations. Status: 1/10/19 Second Read

**HB 399 (Basye)**
Changes the laws regarding health care for persons with disabilities. This bill requires insurance companies in Missouri to cover treatment for symptoms and behaviors of developmental or physical disabilities. Treatment covered will include habilitative, rehabilitative, and therapeutic care along with psychological and applied behavior analysis services. Status: 4/1/2019 Public Hearing Scheduled

**HB 466 (Wood)**
Allows structured family care giving as a covered service under MO HealthNet, subject to the approval of federal waivers. This bill instructs the Department of Social Services to apply for a federal waiver from the federal government to allow MO HealthNet participants with Alzheimer’s and other disorders to live at home in their community and receive assistance from caregivers they choose. Status: 3/26/2019 Second Read and Referred to Committee

**SB 45 (Hoskins)**
Enacts provisions relating to health care for persons with disabilities. This act specifies that third-party payers for health care services shall not limit or deny coverage for treatment of symptoms and behaviors for physically or developmentally disabled individuals if a licensed physician or psychologist determines the symptoms or behaviors caused by the disability require the individual to receive care or assistance from another person and directly affect participation in everyday activities. Status: 3/11/2019 Second Read

**SB 70 (Hough)**
This act requires a consumer of consumer-directed services to permit the vendor to comply with its quality assurance and supervision process, including bi-annual face-to-face home visits and monthly case management activities. During the home visits, the vendor shall document if the attendant was present and providing services as set forth in the plan of care. This act repeals language permitting the Department of Health and Senior Services to establish certain pilot projects for telephone tracking systems. Status: 4/2/2019 Formal Calendar for Perfection

**SB 232 (Sater)**
This act changes the Ticket to Work Health Assurance Program’s expiration date from Aug. 28, 2019 to Aug. 28, 2025. Status: 2/27/2019 Voted Do Pass

**SB 230 (Crawford)**
This act modifies current law to require proper venue in cases of appointment of a guardian or conservator.

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*Legislative Update continued on Pg. 8*
of a minor or incapacitated or disabled person to be the following: (1) the county where the minor or incapacitated or disabled person is domiciled, as long as placement by a court or agency in such county does not count as choice of domicile; or (2) if there is no domicile, then the county where the minor or incapacitated or disabled person has a significant connection, as specified in the act. Status: 3/18/2019

Second Read

HB 107 (Sommer)
This bill revises the term “service dog” to include a “psychiatric service dog” or “mental health service dog” that is trained to do work or perform tasks for an owner with a psychiatric disability, medical condition, or developmental disability recognized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This bill specifies that anyone who knowingly misrepresents a dog as a service dog for the purpose of receiving the accommodations afforded service dogs under the Americans with Disabilities Act is guilty of a class C misdemeanor and liable for any actual damages resulting from the misrepresentation. Status: 3/27/2019 Reported to the Senate and First Read

HB 316 (Barnes)
This bill designates September as Deaf Awareness Month and designates the last week of September as Deaf Awareness Week in MO. Citizens are encouraged to engage in activities to increase awareness of deaf people, issues, and culture. Status: 1/10/19 Second Read

HB 497 (Wood)
This bill designates May 14th of each year as “Apraxia of Speech Awareness Day” to encourage citizens, parents and professionals to better understand apraxia of speech. Status: 1/23/2019 Referred to Committee