

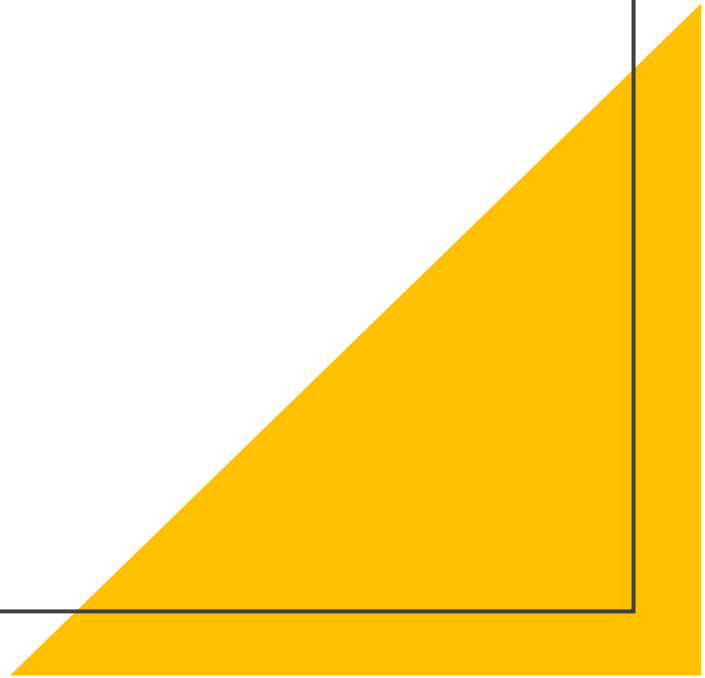
AARP Public Policy Institute Spotlight Report: “The Role of Medicaid Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) during the COVID- 19 Pandemic”

Presented by Mike Nardone

MLTSS Intensive

ADvancing States HCBS Conference

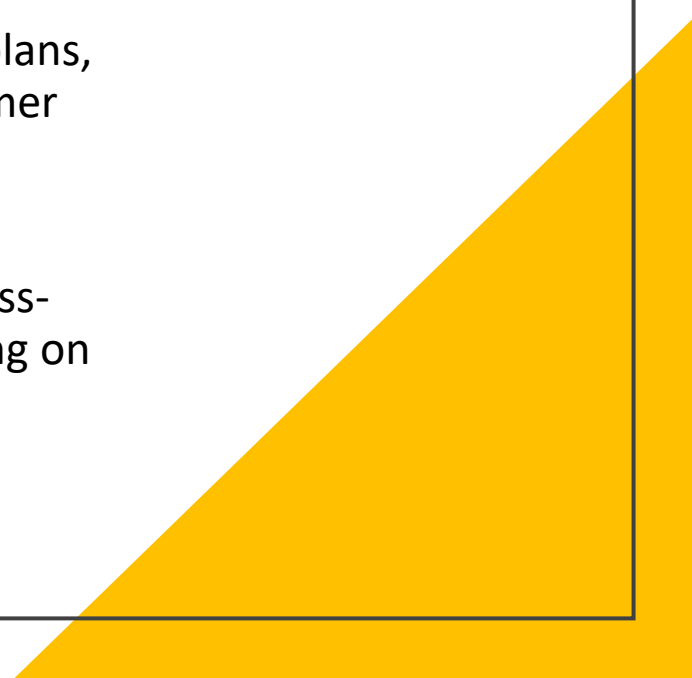
December 7, 2021



Role of Medicaid MLTSS during COVID-19 Pandemic

- States increasingly reliant on managed care as the delivery system for providing long-term services and supports to Medicaid beneficiaries
- COVID-19 pandemic severely tested the ability of states and their MLTSS plans to meet the needs of Medicaid beneficiaries, particularly for individuals in nursing homes
- Spotlight Report, co-authored with Susan Reinhard, explored the challenges faced by Medicaid MLTSS plans as well as innovative approaches implemented to address these challenges
- Lessons learned can help better prepare for future health emergencies as well as point the way to other potential improvements in long-term services and supports

Methodology

- Findings of the report are based on interviews with more than 25 individuals
 - State Medicaid Directors or their LTSS leads in six states (AZ, FL, PA, TN, VA and WI)
 - Cross-section of representatives from both national and local MLTSS plans, national association representatives, LTSS thought leaders and consumer advocates
 - Interviews conducted during 1st quarter of 2021
 - Not designed to provide a comprehensive inventory, but an intentional cross-section of stakeholders who could provide insights into what was happening on the ground as the pandemic unfolded
 - Variability in Medicaid MLTSS programs across states
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Several Key Themes Emerged

- Clear, frequent communication was essential
 - Lead role played by State Medicaid agencies
 - Communication was a two-way street
 - Unique perspective of national plans as pandemic unfolded
 - Clinical expertise that could support state decision-making
 - Iterative process that evolved over time

Key Themes

- MLTSS plans reported responding to real time needs as the pandemic unfolded
 - Deployment of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - In some instances, providing clinical support to nursing homes
- MLTSS plans had difficulties gaining access to nursing home residents to perform care coordination responsibilities
 - Plans reported on efforts to overcome this barrier
 - Standardized schedules and virtual process for engagement
 - Provision of IT technology to care managers/residents
 - Integration with nursing home clinical record systems

Key Themes

- MLTSS plans placed particular emphasis on the needs of people receiving HCBS Services during the pandemic
 - Top priority at outset to supply PPE to direct care workers and providers
 - Plans reported on efforts to address barriers to in-person meetings
 - Immediate phone or virtual outreach to identify needs, reconfigure services as needed, check availability of staffing, test back-up plans and provide additional supports to members
 - Predictive analytical tools used by several plans to monitor care of members and the provider network
 - Significant attention to organizing and educating workforce on the front lines

Key Themes

- CMS emergency waiver flexibilities were critical to supporting state/MLTSS plans response
 - Telehealth flexibilities noted as particularly important by almost every respondent
 - Increased use of family caregivers
 - Modification of existing services or addition of new services
 - Services provided in expanded settings
 - Temporary or one-time direct rate enhancements
- By most accounts, the MLTSS plans responded quickly in adopting these flexibilities


Key Themes

- Some plans engaged in additional initiatives beyond usual contract requirements
 - Efforts to address workforce shortage
 - Advancing States Connect to Care Jobs registry
 - Initiatives to address social determinants of health
 - Food a key priority for individuals isolated in their homes
 - Housing



Lessons
Learned:
Replicating
Success and
Making
Improvements

COVID experience suggests ways to better prepare for future Public Health Emergencies and make longer-term improvements in the Medicaid LTSS System

- Clearly define roles for state agencies/MLTSS plans
 - Enhanced clinical support to nursing homes/other providers
 - Opportunities to strengthen provider contracting
 - Embracing telehealth
 - Evaluation of waiver flexibilities
 - Address data gaps experienced during the pandemic
 - Review and update emergency back-up plans
 - Designate HCBS workforce as “essential”
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Additional Information

- Link to full report:
 - <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2021/the-role-of-medicaid-managed-long-term-services-and-supports.html>
 - Contacts:
 - Mike Nardone at mikenardone@comcast.net
 - Susan Reinhard at LTSSChoices@AARP.org
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