

Submitter : Mrs. Eileen Riley Thatcher
Organization : KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School
Category : Individual

Date: 10/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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Eliminating the reimbursement program for school administration expenditures and costs related to transportation of school age children between home and school will create a serious problem for schools and charter schools in particular . which is why I am writing. The revenue that we receive from Medicaid reimbursement - approximately \$30k last year - helps us to balance our budget in the "special ed and 504" areas, as we provide services to school-age children. These services include physical and speech therapy in the school setting, so it relates to what they are doing, concentrated, i.e. one on one services for some students in reading and evaluation of their progress. The time spent by special education teachers and the special education director is critical to "school working" for these students in need. Please remember they are IN SCHOOL, not at home, waiting for a taxi to go to an outpatient rehab facility. But this is still "critical care" for these students. Keeping track of this time and the evaluation time as well, if you want to call that "administrative services" - well - some of it is time spent on documentation for you, and the students record, but it is part of the "services," no different than if the students were clients at a "special education" school. Having the students . "kids" in their local schools, with their peers, is critical. The financial support from Medicaid is critical . as certainly "state aid" does not fund the budget totally, and a charter school cannot "ask for an over-ride" from the families. Please reconsider this elimination of reimbursement . our children are our future . and these kids need ALL of the help that they receive . their records and files show that. They can become contributing, successful, proud working citizens - with "the help of the village" that raises the child. Please do not withhold your part. Thank you. Eileen Riley Thatcher, School Business Manager, KIPP Academy Lynn. P.S. I have been filing forms for the 15+ years of my career as a school business manager and know that Medicaid's contribution was important to the towns like Carlisle and Georgetown, and the cities like Gloucester, as well as to the charter schools, even if the mechanism for the revenue supporting the school budget was different. Please do NOT stop now .when the need is great, and we are making advances with the kids

Submitter : Ms. Roxanne R. Botz Hovet
Organization : Isanti County Family Services
Category : Local Government

Date: 10/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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I work with Special education and early childhood intervention as part of my position with local government.

I believe this would adversely affect the smaller districts, rural districts as well as the local county government in supporting families with children with or without special needs. It has assisted use of early interventions strategies with families.

I believe the costs will just shift from one entity to another or to others. This could lead to fragmentation of services and not collaboration of services. This may very well lead to a higher percentage impact than what you are using for a guide. Overall it will impact your savings as costs shift to higher priced services through even the Medicaid, state plan medicaid or even waivers.

Majority of the school districts will not to continue to support efforts so they will lay off persons doing a fine job in facilitating/parent counseling/consultation.

This part of the position is instrumental in preventing out of home placements, psychiatric hospitalizations, and a great assistance to our Alternative Responses rather than standard child protection enforcement.

I believe this is now beginning to look like 'Children Being Left Behind' instead of following the preamble of 'No Child Left Behind Act.'
The families that are served here are the poorer families in our region.

If this ends up being a cost shift to local, state, national entities, where will that funding come from? Where will the 635 million go? That appears to be the exact/almost exact number of poor in our world by other statistics, the 635 Million.

Concerned individual.

Sincerely.

Submitter : Mr. Matthew Gillis

Date: 10/25/2007

Organization : Town of Carver, School Department

Category : Local Government

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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If this proposal passes, it will create another unfunded mandate for municipal government and regional school districts. The requirement for local government to pay the medical, educational, and transportation costs to schools out-of-district for children with out a federal (and very minimal state reimbursement in Massachusetts) will ultimately reduce the revenue pool for local services.

These reimbursements, provide revenue to the municipalities and the state. Cutting this program will hurt the ability of state and local goveremtns, especially school departments to provide services. Less funding will be entering the revenue pool, but the legal/regulatory requirements and expenses will continue and the end result will be the erosion of services to regular education program at the expense of federally manadated unfunded special education laws.

Submitter : Ms. Vickie Hugger
Organization : Wilkes County Schools
Category : Other Government

Date: 10/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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I am writing to express my opposition to the regulation proposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services published in the Federal Register (CMS 2287-P) that would eliminate school-based reimbursements now paid with Medicaid funds. This rule would negatively impact services to our special needs students - including medical needs, practitioner availability, and transportation to access various services. (Have you tried to employ a Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist or Speech-Language Pathologist recently? Did you know the average cost in our area for contracting these services is from \$70 - \$90 per hour, plus travel?) While I am certain there has been misuse and abuse of the services - and this should certainly be monitored and corrected, I am concerned about the legitimate needs of children that will go unmet because of the reduction of funds for the school system. Our Exceptional Children's Department depends on the reimbursed funds to help serve the 1,300+ students on our case load. I acknowledge that some superintendents have 'padded' their general funds with these reimbursements, but many school systems have used these monies to increase direct services to students - that has certainly been my experience in Wilkes County. I acknowledge the need for a balanced and realistic budget, but unless this funding cut is going to be accompanied by a reduction in the accountability and responsibility under IDEA 2004 AND a federal mandate to reduce services to children, this proposal to reduce funding is imprudent. Honestly, as a 20+ year veteran of public education, I am not sure how much more we can 'tighten our belts' and still serve our special needs children effectively. Without a paired proposal to reduce services to children the only reasonable message I can send is to urge the withdrawal of CMS 2287-P for consideration.

Respectfully,

Vickie C. Hugger
Exceptional Children's Program Director
Wilkes County Schools
613 Cherry Street
North Wilkesboro, NC 28659

Submitter :

Date: 10/25/2007

Organization :

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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I urge that the proposed rule change which would eliminate all school-based Medicaid dollars NOT be implemented. The current level of funding which supports Family Access Network (FAN) in Deschutes County is much needed. What began as a pilot program for effective administration of Medicaid dollars has demonstrated the capacity to attract private funds to serve more families. For example, last year our church held a fair to raise money for non profits in our community. We donated \$1,000 to FAN because this organization has established itself as the best central point in our community to address a whole variety of needs of low income families. Furthermore, our church has asked FAN to identify needy families to receive holiday food and gifts from our congregation. FAN has created a network of partners to help address the needs of children in low income families. For example, FAN has established an arrangement with a local thrift store to provide donated used clothing to children. Every year, thousands of dollars worth of new clothing from Columbia Sportswear is donated to FAN to be distributed to lowincome families. This is a good investment because children who are ready to learn at school have a better chance of becoming productive citizens. The FAN model which depends on teachers to identify kids with needs works well. The FAN advocate can also tell the family of the child about other federal and state program for which they qualify. We urge that the proposed rule change NOT be implemented. The current level of funding should be continued.

Submitter : Mrs. Teri Gallion

Date: 10/25/2007

Organization : Mrs. Teri Gallion

Category : Nurse

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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As a school nurse, I have utilized the Fan program on several occasions. Those needs were only available from our Fan coordinator. I would not of been able to fulfill my students needs without this program. I believe Fan is a program that is most important in supplying our students with resources that are not available anywhere else.

I am in hopes that this program is continued to be funded and therefore fulfilling our students needs.

thankyou

Teri Gallion RN

Submitter : Mrs. priya james
Organization : SCCOE
Category : Speech-Language Therapist

Date: 10/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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i work with severe autistic population. i would like to explain one of my elementary schooler [now middle schooler] who used to cry and scream all day. he was so lost. he couldn't communicate his basic needs and wants. as he got trained to use pictures to communicate he started blooming. last year i was able to train him with a high tech alternate augmentative communication device which will talk for him as he select the picture. this changed his life. i cannot tell you in words how much its benefiting him. all these were possible because of the money we were getting. how can we tell you in words that can only be felt. the true freedom of our otherwise bonded kids. the ability to get what they want with out screaming. the ability to say 'i love you mom'.

please don't eliminate Medicaid reimbursement for school. this will handicap the professionals and parents. we need it.

plz see this video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWGcfBP0u7s>