



AspireMN

An association of resources and advocacy for children, youth and families

www.aspiremn.org

~ Pass this to colleagues and staff who would enjoy the updates, and encourage them to sign up to receive future updates by emailing kanderson@aspiremn.org. ~

FIRST FRIDAY – updates and ideas to share

January 5, 2018

Federal Updates

- In the final weeks of 2017 Congress passed a significant tax bill with immediate implications for federal and state budgets with projected debate on entitlement reform and additional spending. The AspireMN member meeting will host a panel of federal experts who will review high-level impacts of the outcomes of 2017 federal decisions and project where AspireMN member attention should be focused during the coming 2018 Congressional year. The This Is Medicaid team has begun to build an agenda that strengthens support for the unique ways Medicaid assures services for children, youth, families and other specific populations. AspireMN will continue to hold this key agenda item up as a priority for education and engagement in 2018.

Minnesota Updates

- Uniform Service Standards for Mental Health – DHS visited with AspireMN expert tables and is engaging wide audiences in efforts to create a uniform service standard set. The goal is to simplify processes, respond to concerns of onerous reporting requirements, and present a sound set of recommendations to the 2019 legislature.
- Case Management Redesign – the DHS team designing Minnesota’s approach to Case Management met with a group of AspireMN experts and peers this week to better understand the nuance and requirements to serving children and families. Discussion led to a commitment to continue engaging on the project together – including AspireMN members role in educating wider DHS audiences on the unique skills required of workers and unique circumstances facing contracted providers.
- Mental Health Rate Study – The second run of the Mental Health Rate Study is anticipated to be available in draft form on January 15 for all the organizations who participated in sharing data to inform the study. AspireMN representatives will meet that same week to develop and deliver recommendations to DHS for their final work on the report. Feb 15 is the projected date of publication for the Mental Health Rate Study – to afford opportunity to educate the 2018 legislature with the goal of passing rate reform during the 2019 session.

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- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is seeking public comments through a Request for Information (RFI) to help inform selection and prioritization of health research topics that use the Minnesota All Payer Claims Database (MN APCD). MDH seeks responses from those interested in improving health policy issues that relate to access, service utilization, and population health among other points of interest. This is another opportunity to direct research and policy attention to the need for true parity for mental health services in MN. Please consider responding to the RFI by learning more on the [RFI webpage](#) and responding to the RFI via the MDH [RFI survey](#).
- Quality Parenting Initiative – Minnesota representatives to come en force to the QPI National Convening to be held in New Orleans in January. Foster parents, birth parents, youth, county and state representatives and AspireMN members will represent the emerging work of QPI MN and return home with significant learning and enhanced leadership for our MN movement.

Don't Miss this! Upcoming AspireMN Meetings

- Jan 11 Member Meeting review the [agenda here](#) and [register here](#), the meeting will be held at Radisson North in St Paul
- Residential Committee is hosting DHS Licensing on Jan 10, 2:30-4 at AspireMN
- Organization Advocate and Lobbyist meeting – AspireMN is organizing a discussion with all member lobbyists or staff policy advocates to gain better understandings on our shared agendas and opportunities to mutually support our joint policy work. If you are interested in attending or sending one of your lobbyists please let Kirsten know who you would like included in this discussion.

Save the Dates – 2018 Member Meetings and Conferences

- Member meeting: Legislative Focus – March 8-9, Radisson in St Paul
- Member meeting: Best Practice Focus – June 14-15, PierB in Duluth
- Member meeting: Leadership Retreat – September 13-14, Madden's Resort in Brainerd
- Youth Worker Conference October 8-9, Cragun's Resort in Brainerd
- Annual Membership Meeting – November 8-9, Radisson in St Paul

The must-reads national reports on parity:

Three reports released late November point to the absence of parity for mental health services in health care coverage. Read more from:

- Milliman Research Report: [Addiction and mental health vs. physical health: Analyzing disparities in network use and provider reimbursement rates](#)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [The doctor is out – continuing disparities in access to mental and physical health care](#)
- Kaiser Health News: [If your insurer covers few therapists, is that really mental health parity?](#)

Aspirational Thinking – a point of view by Jon Brandt, Director, Mapletree

Beware of Program Drift

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About twenty years ago, doing a peer review with Ken Anderson, then Executive Director of Port Group Homes, Ken introduced me to the concept of “program drift.” Briefly stated, program drift is the difference between the design of a program and how it has “drifted” from the way it was intended to operate. It’s the difference between the ideal and the real. Program drift insidiously undercuts good intentions, and is present in every program and organization.

Program drift recognizes the “human factor” in delivering services – how competent people, collectively, can lose track of program expectations. Despite thorough training and appropriate supervision, program drift, unchecked, can result in good organizations running afoul of licensing rules or losing track of best practices.

When leaders of organizations understand and convey the concept of program drift, it avoids the need to assign blame or finger-pointing, it facilitates group discussions about what everyone “should” be doing, and helps to bring organization goals and expectations back into focus.

With the start of a New Year, and with AspireMN doing more peer reviews in 2018, this is a good time for agency leadership to take stock of program drift, make corrections, and aspire to program ideals. Happy New Year!

First Fridays will be shared monthly with members. Contributions are welcome. Please send your ideas for content to kanderson@aspiremn.org.