Using SAMHSA’s SOAR Program and Legal Aid Support to Overcome Barriers to Community Integration

Presented by Vaya Health and Pisgah Legal Services
December 8, 2016
Introductions

Today’s Presenters:

• Tracy Hayes, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer for Vaya Health (formerly Smoky Mountain MCO)

• Sarah Lancaster, Employment and Housing Manager for Vaya Health (formerly Smoky Mountain MCO)

• Jaclyn (Jackie) Kiger, JD, MSW, Managing Attorney with Pisgah Legal Services
Course Objective

Identify legal strategies that can be used by MCOs to overcome barriers to housing and community integration for TCLI participants and other MCO Health Plan Members.
Spark → Innovation → Ignite

October 2015
Pisgah Legal
Poverty
Forum

Getting Upstream of Poverty
Rishi Manchanda
Pisgah Legal Services
• Dr. Manchanda incorporated legal services into the homeless patient care teams within the Los Angeles VA System

• Currently working with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to quantify the value of legal services on healthcare outcomes and implement nationwide

• Honored by National Center for Medical – Legal Partnership (GWU)
A-Ha Moment
Spark → Innovation → Ignite

• NC DHHS Transition to Community Living Initiative resulting from the August 2012 Settlement Agreement between the State of North Carolina and the United States Department of Justice

• Housing Barriers – credit/ eviction history, criminal background, etc.
Spark → Innovation → Ignite

• Idea – Create partnership with an innovative non-profit law firm to provide:
  - Direct Legal Assistance
  - SOAR Program
  - Advocacy
  - Education

• Goal - Reduce public healthcare expenditures by addressing social determinants of health and overcoming housing & community integration barriers for TCLI participants
Spark → **Innovation** → Ignite

- Funded through savings achieved by Vaya Health through prudent management of the 1915(b)/(c) Waiver
- Negotiate contract
  - Staffing/ cost
  - Conflict(s) of interest
  - Outcomes/ data – Return on Investment
- Planning meetings
Spark → Innovation → **Ignite**

- Start Date June 2016!
- Community Living and SOAR Program (CLASP)
SOAR Component

• SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery), a national program endorsed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

• Program Goals
  - Increase the number of initial SSI/SSDI application approvals
  - Increase the number of successful SSI/SSDI appeals
  - Increase member access to Medicaid, Medicare, insurance plans available through the ACA Health Insurance Marketplace, and Health Care
SOAR Outcomes
As of 11/23/2016

June 2016 – 1 member supported (TCLI)
July 2016 – 4 members supported (3 TCLI)
August 2016 – 7 members supported (5 TCLI)
Sept 2016 – 6 members supported (3 TCLI)
October 2016 – 3 members supported (1 TCLI)
November 2016 – 8 members supported (1 TCLI)

Total Supported – 29 (14 identified as TCLI – within priority populations)
Community Living Component

Provide advocacy and direct legal aid related to housing and community integration for Vaya Health Plan members in order to overcome barriers such as criminal convictions, registered sex offender status, poor credit/rental histories and need for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Community Living Goals

• Overcome barriers to housing and increase access to housing
• Improve, expunge and/or correct credit scores, credit/ rental history, and criminal/ sex offender registry records if deemed appropriate by PLS after case assessment
• Increase the number of approved reasonable accommodations and modification requests
• Protect the rights of members with disabilities under the Fair Housing Act
• Decrease the number of evictions by settling landlord-tenant disputes
Community Living Outcomes
As of 11/23/16

June 2016 – 4 members supported (4 TCLI)
July 2016 – 4 members supported (4 TCLI)
August 2016 – 4 members supported (2 TCLI)
Sept 2016 – 4 members supported (3 TCLI)
October 2016 – 3 members supported (3 TCLI)
November 2016 – 8 members supported (3 TCLI)

Total Supported – 27 (19 identified as TCLI – within priority populations)
Pisgah Legal Services: Who We Are

• Community-based nonprofit providing free civil legal assistance to help the most vulnerable, low-income individuals and families meet their basic needs in Western North Carolina
• For over 38 years we have tackled problems of poverty through direct legal services, collaboration and policy advocacy
• In 2015 we helped 15,000+ low-income adults and children meet their basic need for food, shelter, safety, health care, and income through civil legal advocacy
• Over 12,000 hours of volunteer assistance, including generous support of 300 Mountain Area Volunteer Attorneys
PLS CLASP Team & Structure

• CLASP provides capacity for the following:
  – 2 Housing Attorneys
  – 2.5 SOAR Case Managers
  – 1 Legal Screener/Assistant

• Referral Process
  – Priority Referrals
  – Target Populations

• Case Coordination
  – Specialized Release of Information/Authorization
Basic Needs: Civil Legal Aid Issues

- Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Child Abuse
- Tenant Rights: Fair Housing rights, unlawful evictions and inhabitable rental conditions
- Fraud, Illegal debt collection and predatory creditors
- Homelessness and lack of disability income and health coverage (SOAR Program)
- Lack of Health Care
- Denial or termination of Medicaid, ACA Health Coverage or denials for authorized services
CLASP Legal Aid Support

• Housing Access
  – Admission Denial
  – Reasonable Accommodations
  – Landlord Negotiations (relationships)
  – Eviction Defense
  – Housing Conditions

• SOAR/Access to Health Care
  – Social Security Disability and/or Supplemental Security Income
  – Medicaid
  – Affordable Care Act (ACA) Coverage
Case Studies

• Case #1
  – Issue: TCLI client applied to several subsidized housing complexes and was denied due to criminal history
    • 28+ year criminal record
    • Client is veteran, diagnosed with PTSD, Parkinson’s Disease
  – Result: Reasonable Accommodation granted; client moved into housing unit within 3 weeks
Case Studies

• Case #2
  – Issue: Care Coordination client received written eviction notice after verbal interaction with landlord
    • Criminal charges
    • Eviction notice
  – Result: Criminal charges dropped, negotiation with landlord (care manager involved) resulted in mutual agreement for client to move, eviction notice withdrawn and new housing secured.
Questions?

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