

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

On June 1, 2021, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners approved an Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (“LME/MCO”) Disengagement Plan to transition the management of Medicaid and uninsured behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability (“I/DD”) services from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare (“Cardinal”) to Alliance Health (“Alliance”).

This Continuity of Services Plan (“Plan”) is intended to outline and frame how services will be managed while transitioning from Cardinal to Alliance. It is recognized that the process must allow for flexibility to respond to changes as the collaborative work moves forward. Throughout this process Mecklenburg County will continue to focus on listening to and receiving information from stakeholders, in particular service providers and most importantly the residents (“Members”) who are served by the providers of behavioral health and I/DD services within Mecklenburg County.

Both the County and Alliance recognize the importance of sharing relevant information with Members, current service providers in Cardinal’s County provider network, and other impacted stakeholders. The County, Alliance, and Cardinal are working in collaboration to ensure continuity of care for Mecklenburg County members. Information about the transition will be made available to stakeholders through each entity’s website, social media platforms and through live and/or virtual town hall meetings and other community events. There will be an opportunity to ask questions during these events.

Members Served

The most important aspect during this transition is to ensure that the individuals and families who are impacted by the transition are well informed and understand the changes occurring in Mecklenburg County. It is Mecklenburg County’s intent to create a seamless transition from Cardinal to Alliance so that services are not interrupted. Notification of the realignment will be made to all Mecklenburg County Members at least 60 days prior its effective date, which is anticipated to be April 1, 2022.

Cardinal will continue to operate as an independent entity and provide services to Members during the disengagement/realignment period. The County, Cardinal, and Alliance will develop a plan to address all open service authorization requests as the transition progresses. The County will look to and reasonably expect Cardinal to provide service authorization information to Alliance in a timely and suitable format to ease this transition and to ensure there are no delays in services to existing recipients of care. Once the realignment is completed, Alliance will make every effort to honor all existing service authorizations for Members and any Member’s Individual Support Plan.

The County will request assistance from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (“NCDHHS”), as needed, in ensuring the exchange of information between Cardinal and Alliance to ensure a seamless transition for Members.

Community Services

Cardinal and Alliance are both Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations (“LME/MCOs”). Each LME/MCO has some unique services that are not necessarily offered by its counterparts in a different region. Cardinal has assured the County that it will continue to provide services to Members during this transition to Alliance. Cardinal has assured the County that it will work with Alliance and provide a list of services (Medicaid and non-Medicaid) that Cardinal offers in Mecklenburg County.

Where there are differences in the services, the County will work with Alliance and Cardinal to ensure that there is a like or comparable service, if appropriate, to meet the needs of the Members.

Alliance will work with Mecklenburg County to ensure a full complement of services is available to meet the behavioral health and I/DD needs of County residents that are insured by Medicaid or are uninsured. Alliance is committed to maintaining the same services whenever possible and agrees to work to add services to its benefit array should services be identified which are not currently offered. To confirm these service details, Alliance needs information from Cardinal regarding the services being provided in Mecklenburg County as well as the funding available from the State. The information has been requested from Cardinal. Differences in available services will be identified during the implementation planning.

Additionally, Alliance has agreed to contract with providers that are in good standing that are currently contracted with Cardinal to serve Mecklenburg County residents. In the event that Alliance is unable to provide a specific state-funded service that is available in Mecklenburg County currently, Alliance has committed to working with local service providers and individuals and families to identify and ensure appropriate services are made available.

Community and Member Engagement

Alliance will reach out to current Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) members in Mecklenburg County to connect with them directly and establish a dialogue to regularly receive their input on issues affecting the public behavioral healthcare system locally and statewide. Alliance will also begin the development of a charter and member recruitment for a local Alliance Mecklenburg County CFAC.

Alliance prioritizes a system of care approach to build on the strengths of individuals, forge partnerships, improve access to services, and understand the story of the people and families it serves in a more complete way. To build a community-based System of Care in Mecklenburg County, Alliance will work with local organizations and public partners to address social and environmental factors, including homelessness, food insecurity, and lack of transportation, that particularly impact the overall health and quality of life of individuals that lack health coverage. Alliance utilizes community collaboratives and roundtables with shared goals and accountability to achieve worthwhile, sustainable outcomes and Alliance will begin to establish these opportunities in Mecklenburg County.

Additionally, Alliance has Outreach and Education, as well as Member and Community Engagement, teams that help individuals navigate the human services system and utilize available local resources. These teams provide various trainings on topics including Medicaid transformation and health wellness and prevention. By providing diverse communities the tools they need to succeed – from education and training, to the development of care guidelines and system navigation – Alliance aims to enable individuals to lead healthier, more satisfying lives.

The County, Alliance, and Cardinal recognize the importance of sharing information regarding the realignment with Members and the Community. The County, Alliance, and Cardinal will work together to arrange community events to share information and provide a forum to allow the community an opportunity to ask questions. The County, Alliance and Cardinal will also share information on our respective websites and social media platforms.

Provider Network

The County, Cardinal and Alliance agree that it is beneficial to ensure a seamless transition from Cardinal to Alliance. To prevent any disruption in services for members and providers, Alliance has agreed to bring into its network the County providers that are in good standing with Cardinal and Alliance and meet all the applicable state-imposed rules and requirements.

Further, Alliance will develop an expedited credentialing process to confirm whether a provider is enrolled in the Alliance network and to assist providers not currently contracted with Alliance with entering such network upon confirmation of applicable state and other requirements. Lastly, there may be providers in the Alliance network who do not serve individuals in Mecklenburg County who express an interest and desire to do so. The Realignment Committee described in the LME/MCO Disengagement Plan will provide guidance on this subject in its work during the transitional phase to help facilitate increased access within the County to provide further choice and service capacity for members.

As the County continues to move forward, the work of the Realignment Committee does as well. This Committee, comprised of a cross section of community leaders overseen by Health and Human Services Deputy County Manager, Anthony Trotman, will continue to develop the broader transition plan focused on the impact on individuals in need of services and providers. As part of their work, the Realignment Committee will have direct community leadership expectations to ensure the Plan is executed in such a way that minimizes the disruption to individuals receiving services and their providers. The Realignment Committee will also be responsible for coordinating communication sessions with key audiences (including Members and their families, providers, and stakeholders) to ensure the implementation period, from approval by the NCDHHS Secretary to the effective transition date, is filled with productive exchanges of information with as many affected parties as possible.

Approved this the 15th Day of June 2021

