NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Health Benefits

ROY COOPER • Governor
KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary
JAY LUDLAM • Deputy Secretary, NC Medicaid

Date: November 20, 2024

RE: CCU County Support Recommendations

Dear County Department of Social Services Directors:

As part of the Continuous Coverage Unwinding (CCU) Process, The Department of Health Benefits (DHB) surveyed counties to identify common statewide challenges and provide recommendations. Based on these findings, DHB identified three areas that counties can consider when looking to improve efficiency and/or operations:

- **Staffing & Staffing Model Tool**
- **Non-Merit Staff Utilization**
- **Remote Work**

Staffing & Staffing Model Tool:
Staffing has a direct impact on caseloads, processing times, internal processes, and staff satisfaction. A staffing model tool is available for counties to evaluate their current vs. recommended staffing levels, as shown in the example below. This tool can be used to initiate conversations but staffing requirements will vary based on county circumstances. The tool and instructions for use are available on FASTHelp under DSS Directors.

TOTAL TARGET STAFFING RANGE				Individual Programs				
6.8	to	**8.7**		AMA Apps	1.1	to	1.3	FTE
				AMA Recerts	0.6	to	0.8	FTE
Below Target Staffing				F&C Apps	1.4	to	1.8	FTE
4.6	<=	FTE		F&C Recerts	0.4	to	0.7	FTE
				LTC Apps	0.5	to	0.6	FTE
Low Staffing				LTC Recerts	0.3	to	0.4	FTE
5.4	to	6.0		FNS Apps	2.2	to	2.8	FTE
				FNS Recerts	0.2	to	0.3	FTE
High Staffing								
9.5	to	10.9						
Above Target Staffing								
11.7	>=	FTE						

Additionally, throughout the hiring process, incorporating a screening process may assist counties finding interested and qualified candidates. County OST can provide the pre-screening and knowledge test recommendations upon request.

NC MEDICAID
NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF HEALTH BENEFITS

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Non-Merit Staff Utilization

Non-merit staff offers counties a range of benefits that can improve operational efficiency, enhance customer service, and support the successful execution of projects and initiatives. Counties can hire non-merit staff or leverage current staff to support caseworker workload and improve overall efficiency and productivity. Utilizing existing or hiring new non-merit staff can be more cost-effective than hiring additional caseworkers, saving the county costs that can be allocated elsewhere.
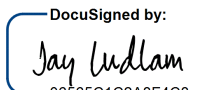
Recommendation	Goal
Hire non-merit staff or assign front desk/receptionist to alleviate workload from supervisors and caseworkers including handling foot traffic and answering phone calls	Supervisors and caseworkers can dedicate more time to higher-priority tasks increasing overall workload efficiency
Assign non-merit staff to complete administrative tasks (i.e. keying in applications, conducting outreach calls, and conducting intake/interviews)	Division of labor allows merit staff to concentrate on high impact activities leading to increased productivity and efficiency
Train non-merit staff to complete returned mail and monitor productivity	Ensures returned mail is managed efficiently and accurately, reducing errors, and improving workflow for the staff
Utilize staff modeling tool to model how significant productivity impact is by reassigning support work from IMC II caseworkers	Provides insights into staff performance, enabling data-decision decisions to optimize current workflow and determine resource allocation
Pursue a temporary worker structure if permanent positions are unfilled	Ensures county-specific needs and workload goals are being met and helps maintain productivity during peak periods
Assign non-merit staff to provide coverage for in-office functions for remote workers	Ensures continuity of operations and allows remote staff to focus on higher-priority tasks

Remote Work

Remote work offers counties a range of benefits that can enhance operational efficiency, employee satisfaction, and community engagement. By incorporating remote work opportunities, a county can provide flexibility into their working environment and retain staff that benefit from a healthy working experience. It allows counties to hire the best talent regardless of geographical location, enabling them access to a wider pool of qualified candidates. It can also ensure operations and county needs are continuing as planned due to emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.

Recommendation	Goal
Offer remote work (full time, hybrid, or flex) to attract more applicants and retirees	Ensures staffing levels are sufficient to handle workload effectively
Implement a remote schedule (full time, hybrid, or flex) to combat losing workers due to compensation, long commutes, and travel expenses	Strengthens employee retention by providing a benefit that aligns with staff preferences
Offer remote work to caseworkers that meet performance metrics	Encourages exceptional staff and county performance
Offer fully remote scheduling to seasoned staff	Strengthen retention staff that have the most experience and knowledge
Establish a remote day per week for caseworkers to have an "uninterrupted" time or client-free workdays	Encourages a more balanced work environment and higher productivity levels
Monitor the change in vacancies based on remote work scheduling (if applicable)	Provides insight that can be implemented into talent acquisition and retention strategies
Review transaction history and daily caseload goals	Promotes a successful remote schedule implementation
Measure remote work in terms of weeks on and weeks off.	Improve staff work life balance that can contribute to staff retention and overall job satisfaction

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Jay Ludlam

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Jay Ludlam
Deputy Secretary, NC Medicaid