

Regional Attendant Services Network
Meeting Notes Oct 12, 2023
By Zoom

Present: Val Bishop de Young (Chairperson, VHA), Stacey Moore (MODC), Sara Hess (Carefor), Denis Boileau (Vista Centre), Matthew Cole (Carleton U/Algonquin College Attendant Services), Lauren McLean (PHSS), Kim Parks (VHA), Chris Cobus and Nathalie Lafrenière (CCSN)

Regrets: Sheila Roy (Groupe Action)

1. Welcome –

- a. Val welcomed everyone in attendance and there was a round of introductions.
- b. Approval of Agenda – approved as circulated.

2. Minutes/Notes of meeting of Nov 17/22 – approved as circulated. As discussed at the Nov meeting, Val will reach out to other providers of attendant services across Central East and Southeast to join this group for the next meeting.

3. Business Arising from minutes –

- CAPS & Annual Budgets – while grateful for the 3% increase, providers acknowledged it's not nearly enough to keep up with the increasing costs of delivering services (e.g., 6% inflation, food, wages, staff recruitment). Attendant Services require complex care and therefore, sufficient wages are required for the work expected. As well the wage compression that occurs when front line staff receive increases and leadership does not. After discussion, it was suggested that a decrease to MSAA targets might be needed in future when preparing annual budgets.

4. New Business –

- a. **ALS Policy 2023** – a combination of the former 1994 Supportive Housing Policy and the 2011 ALS-HRS Policy. The notation of 'no service maximums' means services will be available and provided as resources are available. Each organization will have to decide this ongoingly.

The group discussed notable changes and templates circulated from the Regional ALS-HRS Service Network to assist providers in their response to the need for:

- i) A standardized Complaints Policy
- ii) A standardized Information Package for new clients

These templates were being shared with the CASN group for their modification/use as they see fit.

b. CCSN Inquiries:

- i) Assessments – Nathalie and Chris reported that CSS providers are generally not uploading CHA's to the IAR. The group identified that more access to CHA training is needed. Ontario Health Inter-RAI team was recently contacted to acknowledge the need for more timely CHA training opportunities/the development of training modules that CSS staff could access on demand as new staff are onboarded. Carefor reported that OH had recently increased the number of online CHA training opportunities so that CSS staff who thought they would have to wait until the new year can get trained this fall. Feedback on the OH online training has been limited, but so far positive. Historically, Stacey

Norris, VHA Master Cha Trainer, has also been a resource for CHA training as needed.

Other barriers identified to use/uploading of the CHA, are:

- Many CSS agencies are anticipating a change to their client information systems (with the sunset of CIMS) and CIMS does not have the most current version available of the CHA.
 - the fact that the CHA does not adequately reflect the needs of most clients served by attendant services, but rather, focuses on frail elderly clientele often with cognitive impairments and continence issues, more frequently assessed by HCCSS. Efforts have been underway for some time, to develop a module with Inter-RAI that more realistically reflects the needs of attendant care clients. These efforts have been blocked, however, by the fact that CIHI has regular access to Home Care Assessments done by HCCSS and therefore bases their assessment/description of a client profile (which influences services to be provided) on data from Home Care CA's, which once again, are not reflective of clients receiving attendant care services. Efforts are underway to seek Ministry approval for Inter-RAI to have interRAI Canada have regular access the CHA's done in CSS to obtain more fulsome client data/profile reflective of attendant care clients. **Action:** Val is working on a letter in support of Inter-RAI's efforts in this regard and will circulate it to the group for others interested to sign before sending.
- ii) IPAC practices, with anticipated respiratory virus' this fall (e.g., Covid, flu, RSV), providers are monitoring the landscape (Public Health directives) and keeping in mind the vulnerability of the people we serve. While some agencies loosened directives to staff re: masking during the summer months, they are bringing this back now; many maintained masking for client facing services throughout. Vaccinations required by staff have generally been the two Covid vaccines, however, many staff have opted for getting the boosters also. Flu shots are encouraged.

5. Operational Issues:

a) Hiring Practices: providers recognized the challenges, when hiring new staff, to have all the required screening before they are activated, e.g., police screening, back check, immunization records, PPE requirements. Providers and new staff work with colleges/universities, social workers (who often support newcomers), and public health to get the necessary records and implement required PPE requirements.

b) Attendant Services Application: the group reviewed the common application form with some amendments made. **Action: Participants** to forward specific amendments of interest to Val by email. Val to update the document and recirculate.

5. Next meeting: January 2024 or at the call of the Chairperson.