Testimony of Kelly Phenix

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing

March 5, 2019

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee

Good evening, my name is Kelly Phenix. I am an appointed member of both BHPOC (Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council), and MAPOC (Medical Assistance Program Oversight Council). I am a co-chair of the Coordination of Care/Quality Access Committee (a joint subcommittee of the BHPOC and MAPOC). This Committee has oversight of Nonemergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) for the Husky population. I am also a Husky member.

I am asking the Appropriations Committee to return money from the General Fund for sanctions imposed on Veyo, (NEMT Broker) by DSS for failure to provide on time rides for Husky members. This money in a protected account, to be used only for NEMT related expenses outside the contract, will benefit Husky members and Providers, in an effort to improve NEMT. I am sure that all of you are aware of the challenges with Veyo, over the last 14 months. Per the contract there is relief in the form of sanctions for poor performance issues. Section XIV, #7G (page 51) of the contract reads in part: If a Member is waiting over one hour for pickup or over three hours in the case of a hospital discharge, the Department will impose a sanction of $500 per incident, not to exceed $10,000 per month. To date sanctions of only a little more than $20,000 has been imposed.

I testified last week at the Human Services public hearing. After researching Veyo’s monthly reporting to DSS, I found that every month thousands of rides are late. For December 2018, out of 138,911 rides, 22,002 were late, and 368 no show rides, representing 16% of rides for the month. I am positive that there were more than 8 rides that fall under the unacceptable wait times which should result in sanctions.

I would like the Sanction Money Fund to reimburse Hospitals and Providers who paid out of pocket for stranded member’s a ride home. Veyo was paid to provide these rides, failed to do so, and refuses to reimburse them, because it isn’t in the contract. I would also like to reconvene a Quality Assurance Committee (there was one for the previous broker Logisticare) consisting of all stake holders. Currently Veyo has a “consumer” meeting every month. There are only 8 participants and Veyo refuses to let any outside advocates, consumers or providers participate. A Quality Assurance Committee that includes all stakeholders (advocates, consumers, health providers and cab companies) along with DSS representation would allow for real, transparent input to DSS about NEMT. A portion of the Sanction Money fund would provide stipends for consumers (an amount to be determined later). I am hoping the Committee agrees with me, and will add language regarding a Sanctions Fund to Bill #7166 (An Act Concerning nonemergency medical Transportation for Medicaid Beneficiaries) to transfer current and future sanction funds to a protected account.

While there have been some improvements by Veyo, there are far more many areas of service that have not. The negative impact on members is compromising their health and well-being. Veyo is paid for all rides whether they are on time or not...Husky members deserve better.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak tonight, I am happy to answer any questions.