

A Direct Service Worker Critique of New Administration of Direct Service Provision Under the Kansas HCBS Frail Elderly Waiver

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I work for a client who receives self-directed home and community based services under the Kansas HCBS Frail Elderly Waiver. According to the Kansas Department of Aging, "The Home & Community Based Services program provides an option for Kansas seniors who receive Medicaid and qualify functionally to receive community based services as an alternative to nursing facility care. Services include personal care, household tasks, and health services. The program promotes independence within the community and helps to offer residency in the most integrated environment."

(<http://www.agingkansas.org/SeniorSupport/Programs/progdescriptions.htm>) Home and Community Based Services not only provide the supports clients need to live independent lives with a better quality of life in our Kansas communities they also save the state and taxpayers money since nursing home services are much more expensive.

The state of Kansas has recently implemented extreme micro-management strategies which I contend run counter to the intent and practical provision of the services which seniors need to remain independent in our communities. The AuthentiCare Review worker time management system is a case in point. As I understand it, based on the experience of other states, the State of Kansas expects to save substantial Medicaid dollars by requiring direct service workers to utilize the AuthentiCare Review system to check in and out for work directly from a client's home. The system seems equivalent to a time-clock and records work times to the minute. The implication is that direct service workers have cost the state considerable funds while failing to provide services. As a direct service worker I take exception to and feel insulted by the indirect implied accusation of fraud and lack of care for clients. I have several concerns about the states imposition of this system and unfortunately could list many more.

- I contend that this system inappropriately applies an industrial model to the provision of direct community services. I do not work in a factory making widgets for management; I work for a person in my community.
- The check-in and check-out system specifically asks if I "work for ----" provider which is inappropriate when, as I understand it, I work directly for the client while the provider acts as a contracted program administrator and payroll agent for Medicaid. Similarly, the AuthentiCare "What to do if?" problem solving recommendations inappropriately refer me to my "supervisor" at the provider agency. Again, my supervisor is my client.
- While clients previously monitored and signed off on tasks and direct service workers time on time-sheets the system has now coopted this function, effectively distancing clients from participation in an important aspect of supervision of their direct service worker.
- The periodic in-and-out nature of direct service provision can make signing in and out at the clients home awkward at best and inefficient at worst.
- We have to keep a duplicate record of hours worked down to the minute in addition to reporting via the system to cover problems in the system. This has already happened in my first two days on the system. I understand this has happened with many direct service workers.