



September 30, 2020

Patrick J. O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

RE: Annual Report per Neb. Rev. Stat. §83-1216.01

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Per Neb. Rev. Stat. §83-1216.01 and pursuant to requirements set forth in Section 8 of LB333 (2017), the Division of Developmental Disabilities is required to submit an annual report beginning on or before September 30, 2020. This report details the Division's outcomes, improvement priorities, and activities during the previous fiscal year since submitting the last Quality Management Strategy (QMS) report in September 2019.

In the prior state fiscal year, the Division made progress on its systems for incident reporting. The Division published a revised *Incident Reporting & GER Guide* that clarified definitions and provided guidance to providers to improve the quality of data collected during the investigation and reporting process. Targeted revisions were also made to this guide in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. These revisions provided specific guidance to providers on documenting test results for individuals served on Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services waivers for the developmentally disabled.

In the past year, the Division completed the development and implementation of a Policy Manual. The Policy Manual is a supplement to the waiver applications, state and federal laws, and regulations. It is a comprehensive tool for waiver participants and their families/representatives to learn about the community-based services administered by the Division. Additionally, the Policy Manual serves as a guidance document for service providers to assist in providing quality habilitative services and supports that ensure the health and safety of the individuals that they serve.

The Division has also continued to develop mechanisms to verify that billing claims and payments comply with federal and state regulations. Working with the vendor of the electronic case management system, the Division has implemented additional billing validation that prevent claims from being processed if certain criteria are not met. These improvements build on electronic attendance documentation and the efforts to discontinue paper billing implemented in state fiscal year 2018. Many of the improvements are described in a provider bulletin issued in February 2020, which describes validation of attendance data. It is also worth noting that the progress that the Division has made in the past two years in integrating attendance data into its billing processes has positioned it well for the successful implementation of Electronic Visit Verification required by the 21st Century Cure Act.

The Division is proceeding with procurement of a certified Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) entity to enhance the quality management strategic plan. The RFP for procurement of the QIO was posted in the last state fiscal year. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has completed the evaluation of proposals and made its recommendation to the Department of Administrative Services. Implementation of the QIO will begin in the current state fiscal year with targeted focus on improving the Division's mortality review, critical incident management, and quality data management processes.

Finally, the Division continues its commitment to participation in the National Core Indicators (NCI) project. Nebraska will again participate in the Staff Stability Survey and the In-Person Survey (formerly the Adult Consumer Survey) in 2020. 2018-2019 was the third year Nebraska participated in the NCI In-Person Survey. The 2018 Adult In-Person Survey report was released in April 2020 and can be reviewed at nationalcoreindicators.org. The survey questions are grouped in thirteen categories. Nebraska data showed improvement in 7 of 13 categories, for a 54% improvement rate over the prior year. Following its release, the Division has presented Nebraska data to internal stakeholders and is currently scheduling similar presentations for external stakeholders.

The Division is looking forward to enhancing its quality management systems in the upcoming year by contracting with a QIO. This partnership will allow us to further our development of policies and procedures, data management and reporting, staff training, and other aspects of the Quality Management Strategy. The QIO includes a comprehensive and robust plan to assure that the Division enhances the quality of services, oversight of critical aspects of health and safety, and transparency and availability of data in the coming year.

The Division will continue to work through the Quality Management Strategy priorities and regularly report to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities to keep members apprised of progress.

Sincerely,



Tony Green, Director
Division of Developmental Disabilities
Department of Health and Human Services