

To the NAME Scholarship Committee:

In 2013 I was fortunate to receive the first Anysia Drumheller scholarship to the annual NAME Conference in Grand Rapids, MI. I enthusiastically networked with attendees from California to Maryland and learned a great deal not only about the larger Medicaid picture, but also specifics of how districts managed their programs.

At that time, my only involvement in Medicaid was compiling the annual district SBCH Cost Report. However, in April of 2014, I became the district manager of the school-based Medicaid program in New Britain (a team of one!). I now define my position as a creative money-maker for the district through Medicaid reimbursements of claims and expenses. I am committed to increasing our revenues every year.

68% of New Britain students are Medicaid eligible. Our LEA has been designated one of the lowest per capita income districts in the state. Budget cuts have led to staff cuts without replacement. Our special education department, where I am located, was decreased by two—which leaves the three people remaining responsible not only for their regular work but also the work of the staff who have left. My previously full-time Medicaid position is now challenged by the addition of two more complex responsibilities.

New Britain's Medicaid program struggles with the issues revolving around obtaining more money through reimbursements. I have worked closely with DSS, our Connecticut Medicaid management organization, as well as our Finance office, to fine-tune claim submissions and cost reports, and troubleshoot denied claims. However, the hinge-pin of the entire process revolves around obtaining Parent Consent—difficult when many of our parents do not even attend IEP meetings at all.

Increased Medicaid revenue would provide more supplies for district medical service providers, enable the hiring of additional staff, and enable the development of programs so that outplaced students may return to district.

Attendance at the 2016 NAME Conference would enable me to discover:

- new and creative strategies for obtaining Parent Consent
- more efficient ways to coordinate with our Finance Dept. to align their reports with the changing requirements of the SBCH Cost Report
- examples of other states' and districts' successes with their out-of-district private schools in obtaining documentation in order to claim their services
- improved and streamlined processes for logging and record-keeping in preparation for possible audit
- how to motivate providers to properly document RMTS

I respectfully request that I be awarded the Anysia Drumheller scholarship to the 2016 NAME Conference.

Christine Arena