President’s Corner

This will be the last time I write my column for the NAMEtag as NAME President. I feel this graphic portrays my year representing you members as part of the NAME Leadership team. Because of my position, I was one part of a group who worked together to continue to improve NAME as an organization for you, our members. I want to thank the Executive Committee: Mark Smith (Immediate Past President), Tracy Brunner (President-Elect), Elaine Lerner (Secretary) and Mary Hall (Treasurer) for their support this year. Because of their efforts, NAME met new challenges and took advantage of opportunities. Together with the outstanding members of your Board of Directors and with guidance and coaching from Tamyra Freeman, NAME continues to make huge strides.

NAME has become an organization that not only provides you, our members a means for networking and a source of important and relevant information about School Based Services, but we continue to receive national recognition and increased credibility for the work we do. For those and many more reasons, I thank you all.

I am honored to be a part of this organization and have been given the opportunity to help put the pieces of the puzzle together to continue NAME’s efforts to advocate program integrity for School Based Medicaid reimbursement. I want to give a BIG THANK YOU to NAME’s Executive Director, John Hill for his knowledge, experience and efforts on behalf of NAME as well as his continued, invaluable regular communication with our national partners all year.

As I prepare to hand over the President’s role to Tracy Brunner, I know I am leaving NAME in very capable hands, and I trust Tracy to lead NAME to bigger and better things in the coming year.

And finally, thank you to all of you who volunteer and are involved with NAME. There are a lot of things you have done for NAME that get noticed, but there are even more that no one sees or knows about. Together, you ALL have made this year a most rewarding one for me as your leader.

See you in Baltimore!!

Rena Steyaert (MT) rsteyaert@mt.gov
President
From the Hill

John Hill, Executive Director

MAINTAINING PROGRAM INTEGRITY IS EVERYONE’S JOB!

NAME advocates program integrity for school-based Medicaid reimbursement. That is our mission statement; it declares why we exist. The reason? Without program integrity, Medicaid reimbursement schools receive could be jeopardized. Those are funds that help ensure some of our most vulnerable students will continue to receive medically necessary services. Researchers and advocates remind us almost daily that children’s health is essential to learning. Our organizational aim is to work towards a future where public policy reflects this value. If we are to be successful in achieving this aim, all the stakeholders involved with school-based Medicaid must work together to serve as vigilant trustees of the public dollars to help cover the costs of medically necessary services to eligible children.

NAME has a unique role in helping you and other stakeholders ensure the integrity of your program. Consider these other players we work with and encounter every day:

Parents/Guardians can give consent for Medicaid reimbursement to be accessed, as appropriate to the child and family’s situation. Parents know their child and have important and essential information to share. They are also in a position to monitor the outcomes of the services their child receives and can advocate, as necessary, for both the child and the programs and services that provide children health care and a free and appropriate public education.

Therapists assess the student and develop treatment plans/IEPs that contain goals for positive student outcomes. Therapists provide services and accurately document those services in a timely manner, which are critical actions for monitoring student progress and outcomes, as well as a critical requirement in the billing process.

Public Schools/Local Education Agencies ensure students’ identified needs are being addressed. Schools are in the unique position to ensure eligible children are provided the health and education services that allow them to grow and develop. When schools hire appropriately licensed and credentialed staff that meet the requirements for Medicaid reimbursement, it is a critical step to receiving Medicaid reimbursement. School leaders and staff are responsible and accountable for sending claims that are accurate and appropriate, whether they outsource with a billing vendor or develop the capacity to bill internally. When the school knows, understands and follows the rules, they have a program of integrity.

State Medicaid Agencies have the authority to ensure eligible children in the state have access to Medicaid programs in place so children are receiving early and periodic screenings, diagnoses, and treatment regardless of how they were enrolled in Medicaid. Medicaid agencies with regulations and policy that is clear and concise make it easier for schools to participate in the Medicaid program. Medicaid programs that provide supports and oversight to their schools rather than a punitive approach that focuses solely on auditing, are likely to have schools with a better understanding of the rules and regulations. When there is collaboration with the State Education Agency there is alignment with the state’s Medicaid rules and regulations and the education rules and regulations.

State Education Agencies are able to help schools understand the common ground between education-related rules and regulations (including, but not limited to FERPA and parental consent) and those related to accessing Medicaid reimbursement. The state education agency can provide technical guidance to schools, facilitate communication among the schools for sharing information about new strategies for the day-to-day work such as identifying, enrolling, and treating students and documenting services and outcomes. When there is collaboration with the Medicaid agency rules and regulations, there is alignment with Medicaid rules and regulations.

State Legislators have the power to set state Medicaid and education policies that allow schools to work easily within the Medicaid context. Some have required state Medicaid and education agencies to collaborate. With the stakes ever higher and expectations for return on the investment by state taxpayers, legislators are looking for positive medical and educational outcomes of students, in spite of schools’ shrinking resources.
MAINTAINING PROGRAM INTEGRITY IS EVERYONE’S JOB!

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) oversees and operates the Medicaid program within the parameters established by Congress that intended the program to allow for delivery of Medicaid services in school settings to achieve desired outcomes. CMS can listen to and work with stakeholders to identify and address barriers to compliant programs. When CMS monitors and audits programs to ensure compliance with federal regulations, and provides technical assistance to stakeholders on common findings, corrections can be made quickly and with confidence.

USED/OSERS/OSEP, (US Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services and Office of Special Education Programs) oversees and operates educational programs within the parameters established by Congress. The agency works with stakeholders to identify and address educationally-related barriers to the delivery of Medicaid services in school settings and the achievement of desired outcomes. We have seen that after monitoring and auditing programs to ensure compliance with federal regulations, USED provides valuable technical assistance to stakeholders so that common findings can be corrected quickly and with confidence.

Congress set federal health care and education policy starting in 1988 when it took into account the relationship between the two. Congress has continued to develop policy and provide funding that supports the unique role that schools play in the lives of students and their communities, especially in helping underserved children access services.

NAME provides a forum that allows all stakeholders to come together and discuss successes and challenges in order to ensure that the student’s identified needs and outcomes are met and program integrity is achieved.

NAME looks forward to hosting all stakeholders in Baltimore at the 2015 Annual Conference. The event allows us to renew and continue our shared efforts to enhance the integrity of Medicaid services delivered by schools and achieve better outcomes for students.

What do you think?

Please contact me anytime at:  John.Hill@MedicaidForEducation.org  (317) 902-5446

Message from the NAME President-Elect

From Tracy Brunner (IN)

Please join me in thanking Rena Steyaert for her leadership and service as this year’s President of NAME. I am honored to succeed her in this role and hope to continue her productive work on behalf of this maturing organization. Especially in this initial year following a significant federal free care policy change, I ask all members and friends of NAME to contribute your time, skills and expertise to NAME’s ongoing collaboration with all stakeholders to promote best practices in providing and funding quality, cost-effective school-based health care services and related administrative supports to K-12 students in the U.S.
Committee News

2015 NAME Election Results by Tracy Brunner (IN), Chair, Nominating Committee

As a result of NAME’s annual election of officers in May, the following individuals will begin their new terms of office on October 7, 2015:

**President-Elect**
Melinda Hollinshead (Arizona)

**Region 3 State Medicaid Agency Representative**
Shannon Huska (Colorado)

**Region 2 State Education Agency (SEA) Representative**
Anne Glass (Florida)

**Region 2 Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative**
Kathleen Merry (Michigan)

**Region 1 Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative**
Charles Tyler, Jr. (Maryland)

**At-Large State Education Agency (SEA) Representative**
Mark Smith (Ohio)

Additionally, on October 7, 2015, Dario Avila (Texas), who has been appointed by the Board of Directors in accordance with NAME’s Bylaws, will fill the State Medicaid Agency At-Large Representative vacancy (from October 7, 2015 through the close of the 2017 NAME Conference). He will fulfill the unexpired term of Shannon Huska as a result of her election to a new 3-year term as the Region 3 State Medicaid Agency Representative.

Please join the Nominating Committee in congratulating these newly elected and appointed officers; and please consider volunteering to help carry out the work of the organization through service on a NAME committee. Log in to the Member Only section of NAME’s website and click “Committees” for more details, and watch for announcements about NAME leadership opportunities in the NAMEtag and on NAME’s website: www.medicaidforeducation.org

Governmental Affairs and Public Relations Committee Update

by Amy Edwards, (VA) Chair and Kathy Merry, (MI) Vice Chair

**Free Care Questions from NAME Members Submitted to CMS**

We thank all the NAME members and partners who submitted your questions regarding the free care policy guidance issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in December 2014. The CMS sent a “Dear State Medicaid Director” letter informing programs across the country of these changes. NAME members responded with 75 questions to CMS requesting they clarify the new policy. Because some of the questions were duplicative, NAME provided CMS with approximately 50 questions with some minor grammatical editing, in March, 2015. Staff from the CMS will use the questions to prepare their presentations at the NAME Annual Conference, October 5-7, 2015 in Baltimore, MD.

To see a list of the questions submitted to CMS, log into Members Only and <Click Here>

**Congress Working on Reauthorization of ESEA**

The U.S. Congress has been working this session on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind of 2001. The U.S. Senate HELP Committee (Health, Education, Labor and Pensions) has the lead on the reauthorization of the ESEA. In April 2015, one of NAME’s partners, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) shared its position on some provisions of the Senate version of the bill. See the NASDSE comments at this link: http://www.nasdse.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=hLxquhdRtoM%3d&tabid=36

To read more from the Governmental Affairs and Public Relations Committee - Log into Members Only and <Click Here>
Ahoy NAME Conference attendees!

As the summer sails along, the crew of the U.S.S. NAME is full steam ahead, prepping for our best Conference yet. We encourage everyone to view our current Conference Program on the NAME website. Please check back at least once a month, as we continue to add more detail about what will be a great Conference.

We know after a full day of learning and networking, you may need a little fun. Our social activity will be a pirate ship sail in the Baltimore Inner Harbor Tuesday evening! There will be two sailings so we can accommodate 100 passengers on a fun-filled voyage across the smooth waters of the harbor. Look for an email by early August, announcing registration for this social event has opened.

For those of you early arrivers who also are ‘land lubbers’, we will also be sharing information to help you navigate the rails for a round trip (on your own) to Washington, D.C. It is easy and affordable. Some of our members have already contacted their member of Congress and applied for a White House Tour on their side trip to D.C.

Our Program is already stacked with presentations by federal officials, nationally recognized leaders in therapy, fiscal policy and education policy. We have scheduled the popular Town Hall Meetings so you may connect with colleagues from your Region. We are continuing our annual Fireside Chat featuring NAME’s national partner organizations, as well as the Practitioner Panel featuring representatives from various health and related services disciplines like speech/audiology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, mental/behavioral health and school nursing.

As you review our current list of speakers, we hope you realize NAME has set sail for broader horizons, steering further into the 21st century as the lead ship in the armada of school-based Medicaid reimbursement professionals.

We look forward to seeing you in Baltimore in just a few weeks, matey!