MnCHOICES: Assessment and Support Planning

Joint Presentation by Counties and DHS: Agenda

MnCHOICES Assessment and Support Planning

• Overview
  • History
  • Goals and benefits
  • Path of Continuous Quality Improvement
  • IT Considerations

• 2017 Legislative Priorities
  • Efficiencies
  • Language changes: Reassessment
  • County cost share
How to transform system: Ask new questions

“What programs do you qualify for?”

“What do you need to meet your goals?”

What kind of framework will support this new way of thinking?
Right service at the right time: Services are responsive as needs and circumstances change

Finding the balance with person centered assessment and support planning

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• The person knows what they want
• The person knows what is possible, and
  • What is possible includes what is desirable
• The person knows and understands the risks and “trade-offs” and has been assisted in finding the best balance among them

Informed choice

• Choice has boundaries for everyone
  • Imposed by law
  • Imposed by personal values
  • Ripple effect – one choice creates boundaries on other choices
  • Resource driven
  • Risk involved
What is MnCHOICES?

• MnCHOICES is part of a multi-year effort to transform long-term services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults in Minnesota.

• MnCHOICES is an electronic web-based tool professionals statewide use to conduct a single, comprehensive assessment and support plan. This allows for discovery of the person’s goals, interests and preferences, not just health and safety matters.

• MnCHOICES allows people to make informed choices on all aspects of their life – within established parameters.

• MnCHOICES determines eligibility more proficiently and accurately, and it captures important data for ongoing service planning and evaluation.

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What is MnCHOICES?

• Replaces three assessments:
  1. Developmental Disability Screening (DD)
  2. Long-Term Care and Consultation (LTCC)
  3. Personal Care Assistance (PCA)

• Determines eligibility for Long Term Services and Supports

• Used for all ages and disability types

• Policy rule-based application aligns rules, regulations, statute, etc.

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What MnCHOICES does NOT do

- MnCHOICES does NOT change policies for program and service eligibility
- MnCHOICES does NOT change level of care criteria
- MnCHOICES does NOT replace any diagnostic tools or assessments such as those needed for Mental Health diagnosis or Mental Health services
  - Referrals are made for those types of assessments

Supports a Partnership Between the State and Counties

**The State**
- Provide administrative framework that supports person-centered services
  - Establish a framework for clear & consistent expectations
  - Provide a functional assessment application
  - Assure fair and timely MnCHOICES payment
  - Provide innovative and meaningful training
  - Collect and analyze data for quality improvement

**Lead Agencies**
- Provide and direct service in local communities
  - Act as state's administrative arm
  - Ensure staffing and technology resources to support MnCHOICES
  - Generate data to evaluate and inform policy
  - Advance continuous quality improvement
Lead Agency and State Partnership

- A transformational change requires a dedicated team effort.
- DHS and lead agencies have worked together on the MnCHOICES assessment and support planning initiative.
- Lead agencies have played a critical role in providing input into training, policy, content of MnCHOICES, and testing the software.
- It is important that our partnership continues.

Original Goals of MnCHOICES

- Increase consistency and transparency in access to long term services and supports
- Provide access to the right service at the right time
- Make person centered assessment and decision making the foundation of the service system
- Provide accountability and improve quality
- Foster a shared vision and a culture of innovation
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration
MnCHOICES Payment Structure – Why?

- Assessments are administrative, gatekeeping activities that determine eligibility for programs and services for the proper administration of the Medicaid Program
- DHS delegates many Medicaid administrative functions to counties
- Previously, counties were reimbursed for assessments through 5 different funding methodologies; some as a service and others administrative
- Reimbursing these types of assessments as a service contradicts Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ (CMS) intent to delineate administrative gatekeeper functions from services such as case management
- State statute requires changes to allow for choice of case management as a service, and separation of administrative functions from the service of case management.

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MnCHOICES Payment Structure – Why?

- MnCHOICES activities are eligibility assessments and are reimbursed through random moment time studies
- Time studies draw down Federal Financial Participation (FFP) through Medicaid Administrative Claiming MA; typically counties pay for the non federal match
- Random moment time studies (RMTS) is Minnesota’s approved methodology to pay for administrative activities
- MnCHOICES administrative activity matches federal financial participation with state dollars, rather than county funds

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MnCHOICES benefits individuals and families by:

• Ensuring a person-centered approach by tailoring services to individual’s needs, values and priorities in the context of their local communities
• Increasing understanding of service options so people can make informed choices about what matters to them, such as work or where to live
• Promoting equity across populations and geographic areas
• Providing access to programs and services in a consistent, coordinated, and timely manner

MnCHOICES benefits Lead Agencies by:

• Establishing a state-wide assessment and support planning process that is:  
  • Reliable and valid for determining level of care and service eligibility for all ages and disabilities  
  • Comprehensive to connect people to the right service at the right time  
• Standardizing the assessment process to improve alignment of services with individual needs, and build in quality assurance activities  
• Streamlining support plan development  
• Reducing multiple forms and eliminating manual processes  
• Allowing highly skilled professionals to use their skills to tailor the assessment and support plan process to each person
How does MnCHOICES Contribute to Quality?

- Improves processes and decision-making related to eligibility and access
  - Increases consistency; lessens variability
  - Automates business rules that help establish eligibility, budgets, service criteria
- Generates data to:
  - Evaluate programs and services
  - Measure outcomes
  - Pinpoint deficiencies
  - Develop remedial action
  - Inform future policy decisions

Understanding the Big Picture: MnCHOICES Assessment and Support Planning
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Understanding the Big Picture: MnCHOICES Assessment and Support Planning

Evaluation and identification of improvements

- Business process and workflow
- Enhanced training and technical assistance underway to support certified assessors
- Consolidate and update questions to reflect person centered approach and core data for eligibility and support planning
- Update tool to better support interview format
- IT improvements to update tool based on lessons learned, ensure consistent access to the tool, improve ease of use, and support administrative functions
MnCHOICES 2.0 Redesign

- Having a tool useful for the newly certified assessor and the experienced assessor
- Separate criteria for quality and eligibility, while staying true to policy
- Ensure that CMS and state requirements are met
- Provide content that supports inter-rater reliability
- Establish a built-in mechanism for real-time guidance
- Develop tailored (age-specific/MCO) variations of the tool

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Benefits of Enhancements in 2.0

For People
- Increased focus on the person and what is important to them
- Reduction of interview time
- Increased clarity about the process and the next steps with support planning

For Lead Agencies
- Clearer definitions that promote consistent practice and support ongoing training
- Faster, streamlined tool that reduces interview time
- Saves time by eliminating redundant documentation

- For State
- Supports increased consistency across Lead Agencies
- Help with inter-rater reliability
- Provides more consistent and accurate data to evaluate and inform policy decisions

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MnCHOICES Technology Platform

- MnCHOICES - Intake and Assessment
  - Used to assess the needs of individuals requiring long-term care and support
  - Redesign in process – new features and technology refresh

- MnCHOICES Support Plan
  - Documents the plan to meet the needs of clients
  - Being implemented now – in use by 60 counties
  - Accurately calculates payment rates in a uniform manner statewide

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MnCHOICES Intake and Assessment

- Technical project started in January 2010
- Implementation started in November 2013
- Constructed with a combination of purchased and custom-built components, which are reaching end of life
- Improvements made to data synchronization and server availability in 2016 and 2017
- Technical redesign now under way in conjunction with business process redesign

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Redesign of Intake and Assessment

• Background
  • MN.IT cross-functional team assigned to project
  • Careful vetting and evaluation of options and design considerations

• Current Status
  • Business requirements being developed and documented in cooperation with DHS and counties
  • Development team evaluating design options to support requirements

• Future Plans
  • Frequent releases of prototypes for meaningful county feedback
  • Significant emphasis on quality and quality control processes
  • Tentatively planned for 2018 implementation

2017 Legislative Changes

• MN Statue 256B.0911 Subd. 3f Long-term care reassessments and community support plan updates.
  • Reassessments must be tailored using the professional judgment of the assessor to the person's known needs, strengths, preferences, and circumstances.
  Reassessments provide information to support the person's informed choice and opportunities to express choice regarding activities that contribute to quality of life, as well as information and opportunity to identify goals related to desired employment, community activities, and preferred living environment.
  Reassessments allow for a review of the current support plan's effectiveness, monitoring of services, and the development of an updated person-centered community support plan. Reassessments verify continued eligibility or offer alternatives as warranted and provide an opportunity for quality assurance of service delivery. Face-to-face assessments must be conducted annually or as required by federal and state laws and rules.
• MN Statue 256B.0911 Subd. 5(b)
  • The commissioner of human services shall work with lead agencies responsible for conducting long-term consultation services to modify the MnCHOICES application and assessment policies to create efficiencies while ensuring federal compliance with medical assistance and long-term services and supports eligibility criteria.

Efficiencies

• Create efficiencies – Collaboration between counties and DHS
  • Target effort to make the greatest impact
  • Allow transitional phasing in before new technology solutions implemented
  • Based on statewide evaluation, provide training and technical assistance to support assessment and support planning using MnCHOICES
  • Create efficient workflow
    • Linkages between intake, assessment and support planning
    • On-going review and updating of support plan
### MnCHOICES Efficiencies Workgroups

- **Workgroups**
  - **MnCHOICES Process Workgroup (9/21/17)** Reexamine policy and technical aspects of completing MnCHOICES assessments/reassessments to create further proficiencies within the process. Explore options for a modified assessment/reassessment.
  - **DD Reform Workgroup (9/18/17)** Reexamine DD policy and procedures with the goal to streamline processes and procedures and more closely align with other HCBS waiver programs.
  - **Lead Agency Workflow Workgroup (9/19/17)** Validate core functions of assessors and case managers and identify effective lead agency workflow/process.

### MnCHOICES Efficiencies Completed Since March 2017

- **Completed-**
  - **9 items completed since March 2017**
    - **Examples include-**
      - Launch of electronic support plan for more efficient support planning; information gathered from the assessment is automatically transferred into the support plan, where service rates are also calculated. Staggered statewide launch began June 2017. Lead agencies report a time savings of 30-90 minutes per support plan.
      - Reduced the number of questions in MnCHOICES that are required before running eligibility by approximately 97 questions (exact number is age dependent). In addition, there are 49 questions where the requirement was removed but are recommended to be completed at some point before closing the assessment. Effective September 8, 2017. DHS Quality Assurance staff report during testing an average time savings of 1/3 of typical assessment time.
      - Assessment timeline change for Nursing Facility (NF) assessments following an admission for persons under the age of 65. The assessment timeline has changed from 40 days to within 80 days after admission. Effective 5/25/2017. This change results in a decrease of assessments needed statewide by approximately 14% (CY 2016 data.)
MnCHOICES Efficiencies in Process

• In Progress:
  • 10 items currently in progress
    • Examples include:
      • Policy change to allow a phone-based assessment interview for updating eligibility status when starting someone on the DD waiver.
      • Ability to easily update service plan for certain changes without having an assessor meet with the person. Being addressed in MnCHOICES Process Workgroup-meeting on 9/21/2017.
      • Providing training to emphasize the effective use of the MnCHOICES tool for capturing what is important to, and for the person; reducing the need to “fill everything out” during the face to face assessment. November 2017.

2017 Legislative Changes

• MN Statue 256B.0911 Subd. 6(i)
  • Between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2019, the state shall pay 84.3 percent of the nonfederal share as reimbursement to the counties. Beginning July 1, 2019, the state shall pay 81.9 percent of the nonfederal share as reimbursement to the counties.
MnCHOICES County Share (MN Statue 256B.0911 Subd. 6(i))

• Effective Date
  • The new financing percentages will be applied to the reporting period beginning the first quarter of SFY 18 (7/1/17 – 9/30/17 estimated payment date early November).

• What Counties Should Expect
  • DHS will remit to counties only the approved percentage (84.3% in SFY 18 and 81.9% in SFY 19) of the non-federal share (state) of the LTSS payments
  • The federal share payment will be unaffected by the change and will be remitted in full.
### MnCHOICES County Share (MN Statue 256B.0911 Subd. 6(i))

**Comparison Between Methods**

**Before Change**
- $5000 (LTSS Eligible Expenses)  
  \( \times 50\% \) (FFP)  
  $2500 (Federal Share)

- $5000 (LTSS Eligible Expenses)  
  - $2500 (Federal Share)  
  $2500 (State Share/Non-Federal)

Payment $5000 (Federal + State)

**After Change**
- $5000 (LTSS Eligible Expenses)  
  \( \times 50\% \) (FFP)  
  $2500 (Federal Share)

- $5000 (LTSS Eligible Expenses)  
  - $2500 (Federal Share)  
  $2500 (State Share/Non-Federal)  
  \( \times 84.3\% \)  
  $2108 (Reduced State Share)

Payment = $4608 (Federal + State)

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**Break Down of Payment**

$5,000 Eligible LTSS Expenses:

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<th>Share Percentage</th>
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<tr>
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<td>State (42%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$392</td>
<td>County (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
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Learn more about *MnCHOICES*

*MnCHOICES* webpage:


*MnCHOICES* county link:

www.dhs.state.mn.us/mnchoices

*MnCHOICES* mailbox:

dhs.mnchoices@state.mn.us

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