

# **Strengthening the roles of health plans serving people with disabilities in emergency planning, response, and recovery**

APHA Annual Meeting (Virtual) 10/25/21

**Session Title:** 3167.0 Healthcare Access and Integrating Disability into Education and Practice for Providers (public health, medicine, and health professions)

# Presenter Disclosures

Strengthening the roles of health plans serving people with disabilities in emergency planning, response, and recovery

**1. The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**

- I am a member of the Centene Corporation National Disability Advisory Council
- Grants: Centene, Anthem, & Inland Empire Health Plan provided start up funds for the project

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DISABILITY  
POLICY  
CONSULTANT



- **Adding Value to Service by Increasing Access**
- **Health Care & Disaster Inclusive Practices**
- **Training, Policies, Processes, & Exercises**
- **Actionable Disability Competencies**

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# Cover

- **Project**
  - overview
  - activities & findings
- **Policy change opportunities**
  - Federal & state regulations

# Emergency Planning & Response Roles for Health Plans Serving People with Disabilities



# Why Health Plans

- Serve more people with disabilities than any other service or system
- Often overlooked as an essential partner before, during, & after emergencies
- Have resources, capability, & capacity
- Opportunities for strategic partnerships

# Purpose

- Investigate, detail & disseminate good interventions
- Apply past lessons from COVID-19 & other co-occurring & previous emergencies
- Advocate embedding resilient processes into member-centered emergency practices

# Report's Audience

- Health plan staff and leadership
- Health service providers, home and community-based services
- Accrediting, standard-setting , & quality assurance organizations
- Disability-led, disability-focused, & other community-based organization
- Emergency management consultants
- Emergency managers & planners
- Federal & state legislatures
- Federal & state health agencies
- Grantmakers
- Researchers



# **Project information gathering:**

- **66 key informant interviews**
- **5 organizational learning consultations with home health, health plans, & health plan companies**
- **Review of online guidance content from government, trade associations & researchers**
- **Disseminate final report**

# Report Sections

- Purpose & Background
- Health Plan Leadership
- Case Management, Care Planning & Care Coordination
- Member Emergency Communication
- Contractor & Vendor Agreements
- Community Partnerships
- Workforce Training
- Policy Change & Other Points of Influence

# High Priority Policy Changes

**Government statutory &  
regulatory requirements**

- **Effective oversight &  
enforcement**
- **State contracts**

# **Vague state contract language:**

**The state requires that Medicaid health plans have a well-documented emergency plan in place for specific members**

**–Problem: no definitions of “well documented,” “specific members,” or when plans are reviewed for update**

# Case Managers & Contracting Opportunities

- Member's emergency plans
- Life-safety checks
- Home delivery of food, water, supplies, etc.
- Institutional diversion & transition
- Debris removal focused on critical accessibility routes
- Telehealth readiness
- Navigating disaster recovery assistance
- Developing, revising, updating emergency member communications
- Home modifications & repairs

# High Priority Policy Changes

Health plan leadership  
commitment

- **Creating an emergency cross-functional management planning & response team**

# High Priority Policy Change

- Mandate vendors of critical therapies, equipment & supplies - upon delivery, service & repair to:
  - Teach users how to activate emergency procedures
    - What to do when providers' critical infusion therapy sites are unavailable

# Advocate for equipment providers

- To give information on

- Equipment /supplies - how:

- Long batteries & backup systems will last & how to extend use with limited or no power
    - To get quickly get loaners & repairs
    - To begin replacement process when lost or not repairable



# Advocate for equipment & provider sites emergency requirements

- **Providers:**

- Give clear verbal & hard copy (including pictures) instructions in usable, understandable formats & preferred languages
- Conducts annual reviews to assess &, when needed, update accuracy & effectiveness of these instructions (clarity, practicality, plain understandable, & culturally appropriate)