Public Comments and Responses Related to Stanly County's Decision to Disengage from the Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Managed Care Organization and Realign with Partners Behavioral Health

Comment #1

Comments Regarding Disengagement from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare

Human Services Board

Carol Cranford <ccranford@fsnsp.org> Wed, Dec 16, 2020, 10:33 AM

to me

Family Support Network of Southern Piedmont (FSNSP) has served families of children with special healthcare needs and disabilities in Stanly County for over 20 years, helping them find resources, navigating the service systems, offering workshops, and connecting parents through parent to parent matching or parent groups for support. We partner with other agencies in Stanly County that support and advocate for families of children with special healthcare needs and disabilities. FSNSP has helped connect many families with Cardinal Innovations Healthcare for services, particularly through the NC Innovations Waiver or B3 Services. The Stanly County Board of Commissioners decision to disengage from Cardinal came as a big surprise to our agency and other agencies that serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disorders (IDD). The voices of the agencies advocating for individuals with IDD were not considered when the decision was made to disengage.

While we realize that Cardinal has not been without fault over the years, they have made many positive changes with the new leadership. We recognize there may still be issues with placing children or adults with extreme mental health needs. Placing those individuals in an appropriate setting is crucial and we believe this is a small minority. Cardinal has put a plan in place to quickly rectify this situation. The majority of families of children with IDD that our agency works with are satisfied with the services

their child gets through Cardinal. Families do complain about the long waiting list but that is the case with all LME/MCOs across the state. That will not change by engaging with a new LME/MCO. While a family is waiting on waiver services, they are able to get limited services if they have Medicaid. Receiving the NC Innovations Waiver or other services is life changing for families. I know this from personal experience with my own son.

Hundreds of families in Stanly County will be negatively impacted by changing to another LME/MCO. Some may not be able to afford the adjustment period of finding new providers. It will cause undue stress and financial hardship on these families. We ask that you reconsider your decision and continue allowing Cardinal to serve Stanly County families.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at 980-522-8740.

With gratitude,

Carol Cranford

Carol Cranford
Executive Director
PO Box 824
Harrisburg, NC 28075
980-522-8740
www.fsnsp.org

Andy Lucas <alucas@stanlycountync.gov> Wed, Dec 16, 2020, 11:00 AM

to Carol

Ms. Cranford,

Thank you for your email.

Please know your son's provider will not change with the shift to Partners Behavioral Health. In fact, the Stanly County Board of Commissioners sought a partner with Partners Behavioral Health that would seamlessly accept all of the providers currently providing direct care to our residents with the disengagement from Cardinal. It is not our intention to disrupt services, only to enhance behavioral health services.

Partners and Cardinal are the MCOs (managed care organizations), they are not the direct providers of care. Partners will accept your son's provider and every other direct provider into their network. Stanly County and many other counties in Cardinal's catchment area have attempted on multiple occasions to voice concerns regarding Cardinal's approach to mental health services. Those concerns have been simply dismissed by Cardinal's leadership for multiple years. Cardinal's one size fits all approach does not work for rural counties. Thus, Stanly County is moving to a new MCO partner that understands the value of innovation, collaboration and true partnership.

I am confident you will find the Partner's organization much easier to work with and more aligned to our local values. Below is a link to Partners' website. This information may be helpful.

https://www.partnersbhm.org

I am available anytime to discuss the Board's decision, our transition plan, and your concerns. Please do not hesitate to call or reach out via email. Thank you and have a good day.

Andy Lucas
Stanly County Manager
704-986-3600 (office)
704-984-1258 (cell)
alucas@stanlycountync.gov

Comment #2

Cardinal Disengagement

Human Services Board

LaRhonda Watkins <4watkinsjjal@gmail.com> Mon, Nov 23, 2020, 8:55 AM

to me, dhclayton

Dear Mr. Lucas,

Thank you for your letter in response to my comments from the CFAC meeting Tuesday evening. While I understand the information regarding disengagement was posted on the website, my concern is that people who have a vested interest in this decision were not given a chance for input. There were no town hall meetings, or even outlets through social media or the SNAP for feedback. As a parent, I am offended that the county has assumed it knows what's best for my son when they don't know him or how this will impact others like him.

It seems to me that the decision is being made to benefit two narrow categories: mental health and foster care children. However, there are other disabilities affected by your decision, including Intellectually Delayed Disabilities, Substance Abuse, and Traumatic Brain Injury will be affected. Families are dealing with COVID and with the healthcare transformation getting ready to start next year, facing a new provider coming in and adjusting to the needs of the family unit which occur daily for some. For some families who struggle now with finding help, this will just add to the overwhelming stress.

Where is the research posted for the public to see how the decisions were made? How long has this problem been going on and what avenues have been pursued to fix it and prove they didn't work? If mental health and the well-being of foster children are being focused on, why not focus on working with the current provider and fine tune the problems with it instead of disrupting the whole process for many individuals? Since Cardinal is currently serving many other disabilities well, shouldn't DHHS address how they can work together to find a resolution?

I would like to hear how this new provider will help my son with better service than Cardinal, and the research that led you to that conclusion. Thank you for your time. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you more if needed. I appreciate your response and ask that you consider all disabilities involved.

Respectfully,

LaRhonda Watkins (Parent IDD)
208 Driftwood Lane
Locust, NC 28097
Cell: 704-701-1274

Andy Lucas <alucas@stanlycountync.gov> Mon, Nov 23, 2020, 9:16 AM

to LaRhonda, Dolly

Ms. Watkins,

Thank you for your email.

Please know your son's provider will not change with the shift to Partners Behavioral Health. In fact, the Stanly County Board of Commissioners sought a partner with Partners Behavioral Health that would seamlessly accept all of the providers currently providing direct care to our residents with the disengagement from Cardinal. It is not our intention to disrupt services, only to enhance behavioral health services.

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I am available anytime to discuss the Board's decision, our transition plan, and your concerns. Please do not hesitate to call or reach out via email. Thank you and have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving holiday with your family and friends.

Andy Lucas
Stanly County Manager
704-986-3600 (office)
704-984-1258 (cell)
alucas@stanlycountync.gov

Comment #3

--------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Jean Andersen** <tbiadvocate@windstream.net>
Date: Tue, Nov 17, 2020, 9:45 AM
Subject: Disengagement
To: Matthew Swain <mswain@stanlycountync.gov>

Dear Matt,

Thank you for your response to my earlier email. I am still confused, however, regarding how this change and possible disruption to families and fragile individuals will benefit those in Stanly County with mental health, substance use, intellectual disabilities, or traumatic brain injury, under Partners. With the advent of Standard and Tailored Plans, the community is facing many changes…all during a time of uncertainty caused by COVID-19. Are not all MCOs in the state under the same basic rules regarding services, funds management, and community engagement prescribed in NC Statute 122c?

The County Commissioners website mentions community engagement, yet I have been unable at this point to locate any individuals, family members, Local Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (advises Local MCO), or State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (advising legislators and the Secretary of DHHS) members who were in any way included in this decision making process. I also have concerns about the ability of Partners to sustain the 'lift' required to take on a large number of members at such a distance.

Additionally, several of us were unable to join the 'live' meeting yesterday, November 16. The posted link does not appear to work, though we can access meetings from past months.

I look forward to hearing your response.
Thank you,
Jean