



**TO: Members, House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee
Members, Senate Aging and Youth Committee**

FROM: Lisa Schaefer, Director of Government Relations

DATE: October 18, 2016

RE: Aging Waiver Enrollment

On behalf of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, and the CCAP Human Services Committee, we write to express our concerns related to the statewide contract with Maximus for level of care assessment on seniors, and ask for further accountability, consideration, and review to the needs of our counties' aging population.

In April 2016, the PA Department of Human Services transferred enrollment responsibility from the local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to Maximus, a statewide contractor. The waiver program serves adults 60 years or older who are eligible for medical assistance and nursing home care, and all consumers requesting home and community based services who are nursing facility clinically eligible are required to go through this process prior to receiving services, which allows individuals to receive this care in their home.

Significant problems have occurred with the transition, including lost enrollments, and an inability and extreme difficulty on the part of consumers in getting in touch with Maximus representatives. The change results in seniors and their families having much less support in navigating the enrollment process, which is not only complex, but also essential for the senior to receive home and community based services. While the counties are not directly responsible for the AAAs, counties are receiving significant numbers of complaints from families who do not understand the change.

Our aging population and the local AAAs have identified numerous issues and concerns related to the aging waiver and the statewide contract, which include the following:

- Our research indicates that the number of completed enrollments have decreased significantly under the Maximus contract compared to the number of completed enrollments by the AAAs.
- AAAs are completing the necessary assessment of the older adult; AAAs are under great pressure and scrutiny to complete the assessment within 15 days and send it to Maximus; in turn Maximus is failing to complete the process of enrolling the consumer into the program after AAAs have done the assessment.

- Enrollment delays by Maximus means that older adults who are trying to avoid a nursing home by receiving care in their home are instead receiving no care at all, which increases the likelihood that they will be forced into a facility.
- Various administrative inadequacies, such as lost submitted assessment paperwork, and inaccurate information that the assessments have not been submitted/received by the AAAs, leading to consumer dissatisfaction.
- The state Department of Aging has now asked AAAs to establish a system to track all assessments we send to Maximus and the status of the referral so that Aging can cite specific numbers when communicating with DHS. While this request appears to be one that will help avoid our constituents falling through the cracks, it is being asked of counties without reimbursement or consideration of the burden it creates. We are concerned that steps taken to resolve the issues with Maximus do not place unfunded mandates on counties or AAAs.

Recently, CCAP members amended their 2016-2017 Platform, which forms the basis of the Association's legislative and regulatory policy, to include a platform plank addressing the aforementioned concerns. The resolution adopted by the CCAP voting members is as follows:

"...CCAP further supports immediate action by the Departments on the growing number of complaints from seniors and their families with regard to Maximus contracted services for Aging Waiver Enrollment and failure to respond to phone calls. Finally, CCAP supports analysis by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Aging of the impact of the statewide contract for level of care assessment on seniors, their families, and counties to avoid unintended consequences."

Counties seek assurances that availability of services will not be reduced and that funding that supports the needs of consumers takes precedent over creation of administrative structures. These major changes could have a dramatic impact on our seniors as well as the ability of counties to provide services. Therefore, our Association strongly urges the Departments to delay implementation of the statewide contract for level of care assessment on seniors unless and until there is a complete understanding of impacts beyond those that are consistent with the goals of the Departments.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter and would be happy to discuss further with you at your convenience.