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Ohioans Receive First Notice of Enrollment in MyCare Ohio Demonstration *Ohio Consumer Coalition Looking Out for Persons covered by Medicare and Medicaid*

COLUMBUS: In late December 2013, 114,000 “dually eligible” Ohioans—older adults and adults with disabilities who are covered by both Medicare and Medicaid coverage—received a holiday surprise: a notice from the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) that they will be enrolled in a “MyCare Ohio” demonstration project aimed to provide better coordinated care through managed care.

Ohio Consumer Voice for Integrated Care, a diverse statewide coalition, wants enrollees and family members to know that the new program offers the potential for improved care and more consumer control over important health care decisions, but that enrolled members and their family caregivers need to help shape the program to make sure it works well for everyone.

In today’s fragmented health care delivery system, dually eligible consumers, who tend to be poorer, sicker and more reliant on supportive services, are forced to navigate through a complicated maze of multiple doctors, medications, and programs. This care is expensive, estimated at over \$2.5 billion in annual Medicare and Medicaid spending in Ohio. That’s why Ohio is working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to create this integrated program called “MyCare Ohio.”

“MyCare Ohio offers the promise of improved care coordination across settings and better health outcomes for populations most at risk,” said Cathy Levine, executive director of UHCAN Ohio. “But at the same time, this new demonstration presents challenges and changes to those enrolled, since Ohio’s existing managed care plans have limited experience in meeting the needs of these vulnerable consumers.” The Department of Medicaid indicates that consumers should also expect more choice and control over the care and services received.

“Our advice to consumers who received this initial letter is first of all to read it and then to begin to think carefully about which choices will be the most beneficial to them and to reach out to trusted community organizations should they need more information or assistance during the enrollment process. Further, we believe that this demonstration will work best when persons become fully engaged in planning for their own health care and long term services and supports. In addition, when consumers become actively involved in advocating for their own needs and the needs of others, their input can help shape a health care delivery system that works for all stakeholders—consumers, providers, and payers,” said Deborah Nebel, director of public policy at Linking Abilities Employment and Potential (LEAP), a Northeast Ohio Center for Independent Living, and co-chair of Ohio Consumer Voice for Integrated Care.

Consumers will be able to choose their plans starting in February 2014, with enrollment beginning March 1, 2014. Prior to that date, participants will receive more detailed instructions from the state on how to enroll in MyCare Ohio. Here are some things consumers and their families need to know:

- This targeted enrollment group includes those dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid age 18 and older who currently reside in a nursing home or assisted living facility, those who receive services through a Medicaid waiver program such as PASSPORT or Ohio Home Care, those with severe and persistent mental illness, and those who receive community Medicaid on a monthly basis.
- Enrollees will be able to select from two managed care plans in each region (except for enrollees in the region including Cuyahoga County, which will have three plans).
- Dually eligible Ohioans who do not voluntarily select a plan in their area will be automatically (“passively”) enrolled in one of the plans, beginning March 1, 2014, with the benefits starting April 1 if they live in the northeast Ohio region. In all other areas of the state, enrollees will be automatically enrolled in May or June 2014. An estimated 114,000 Ohioans are targeted for enrollment in the seven regions. The demonstration is not statewide.

Learn more about Ohio Consumer Voice for Integrated Care at www.uhcanohio.org or contact John Arnold, project coordinator, at 614-456-0060, ext. 237.

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Ohio Consumer Voice for Integrated Care is a coalition coordinated by UHCAN Ohio, which includes Ability Center of Greater Toledo, Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, Alliance for Retired Americans in Ohio, Contact Center, Disability Rights Ohio, Easter Seals of Ohio, Legal Aid Society of Columbus, Inc., Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential, Center for Independent Living Options, ProSeniors, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Ohio Olmstead Task Force, Ohio Poverty Law Center, Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council, and UHCAN Ohio.

UHCAN Ohio is a consumer health advocacy organization working to achieve high quality, affordable health care for all Ohioans and building the voice of consumers in health care reform.

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