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SEAGR Staff Provided Rate Determination & Time Reporting



SSIS FISCAL MENTOR MEETING

FEBRUARY 17, 2016

Folder Documents

2

The following documents are in the folders that I have given you. Depending on how our discussion goes today, I might not have time to go over all of them but want to encourage you to review them when you have time.

- ❖ SSIS Mentoring Checklist. This checklist was created by Sherburne County for their county mentors to use when training new staff. One way this list helps is that it ensures all billable time is being captured! (Time Reporting!)
- ❖ Wright County Health & Human Services 100% Time Reporting Project Document. This was created by Michelle Miller from Wright County. It is a summary of the 43 agencies that responded about 100% time reporting in your agencies. I think you will find this document useful whether your agency is doing any % of time reporting and are thinking/wondering if you should continue and perhaps even more valuable to those counties who are not doing any % of time reporting – you should be able to see the benefits as to why you might want to start. Basically **time =`s MONEY!**
- ❖ Time Reporting and TMC Standards for Social Workers. This document is the policy that Sherburne County has in place that spells out the time reporting requirements for their staff. Cindy Bayles was agreeable in letting me share this with you. If you are trying to create guidelines/policies for your agency, why recreate the wheel from scratch if you don't have to?

The SEAGR Report (DHS-2557)

3

- The SEAGR Report collects cash basis expenditure data based upon BRASS (**B**udgeting, **R**eporting, and **A**ccounting for **S**ocial **S**ervices) codes and cash basis revenue data broken down by funding source and BRASS program area.
- The SEAGR report has simplified county fiscal reporting by eliminating many previously required reports by FOD. In addition, many new fiscal reports, that would otherwise have been required, have been incorporated into the SEAGR process.
- Serves as grant earnings documentation for a number of funding streams, and provides financial data necessary for DHS to report on county social service activity.

BRASS Codes

4

- BRASS is the name of Minnesota's reporting structure that standardizes fiscal reporting from counties for social service programs. It defines the specific service activities that will be used for fiscal reporting from counties to DHS.
- It was developed in 1991 and was designed to be compatible with COFARS (the county accounting structure which is also service activity based).
- The current BRASS code bulletin is #15-32-09 (September 30, 2015).

What does a BRASS Codes Look Like?

5

- The core of each BRASS code is 3 major digits.
- Each serves a specific function and together they define a service.

1st digit = Program Area (there are 6 program areas)

- ✦ Children's Services – Code 1
- ✦ Child Care – Code 2
- ✦ Chemical Health – Code 3
- ✦ Mental Health – Code 4
- ✦ Developmental Disabilities – Code 5
- ✦ Adult Services – Code 6

2nd and 3rd BRASS Code Digit – Service Category and Specific Service

- ✦ There are about 10 service categories and within each of those categories there are various numbers of specific services.

SEAGR Generated Data

6

- At the end of each quarter, after your SEAGR report is “audited” by Julie to verify the accuracy and reasonableness of the report, the expenditure and revenue data is subjected to an allocation program in order to paint a representative picture of county social services and how those services could be funded.

When the allocations are done, each BRASS code can produce the following:

- Purchased service expenditures (\$)
- Number of units of purchased service (hours, days, etc.) where collected
- Staff expenditures (\$)
- Staff Hours
- Total Expenditures (\$) (purchased + staff)
- Each State revenue amount allocated to the BRASS code
- Each federal revenue amount allocated to the BRASS code
- Each miscellaneous revenue amount allocated to the BRASS code
- County revenue amount needed to fully fund the BRASS code (this is a calculated amount where: Total Expenditures minus state revenue minus federal revenue minus miscellaneous revenue = county revenue)

SEAGR Report - Expenses

7

The SEAGR report collects the following cost data for each BRASS code:

- Purchased services expenditures – actual. This column total must equal line 1 on the Social Service Fund Report (DHS-2556).
- Units of Purchased Service – actual. The unit amount of delivered services (hours, days, etc.) is usually part of the service agreement with the provider. Not all BRASS codes require units of service – usually because the unit type could vary or units would be very difficult to quantify.

SEAGR Report – Expenses continued

- Staff-provided services expenditures – allocated. These expenditures are computed through an allocation of overhead (administrative) costs to each BRASS code based upon the hours of staff provided service. (i.e. \$60/hour). This rate is multiplied by the hours in each BRASS code to come up with the estimated staff expenditures.
- The estimated staff expenditures have several limitations that should be taken into consideration when using this data.
- It was an arbitrary decision to use social service staff service time to distribute the total overhead costs into BRASS codes. Second, all overhead costs are shown under staff expenditures, yet some of these costs would logically be used to administer and supervise purchased service activity. This limitation was recognized in building the SEAGR report, but no reasonable method could be agreed upon to accurately quantify and move some of these

SEAGR Report – Expenses continued

costs to purchased services. A third limitation is caused when using a single rate (cost/hour) for all the county's BRASS codes. It would be logical to assume that staff costs per hour would vary for the different services. For example, a service could be provided by a SS worker with a Masters in Social Work versus another service that may be provided by a lower paid case aide. Once again, this limitation was recognized but no consistent or reasonable method could be agreed upon for all counties or DHS to differentiate between the many factors to more accurately reflect the estimated staff costs. A few of the larger counties do in fact use various "cost centers" to provide a more accurate distribution of overhead costs to their BRASS codes.

- Based upon the previous information, it is important to emphasize that these "staff expenditures" are merely an estimate, albeit, derived consistently.

SEAGR Report – Expenses continued

- Hours of Staff-Provided Services – actual. County SS workers are required to log their time to a BRASS code when they provide that service as defined in the BRASS manual. In some cases a SS worker is setting up delivery of a purchased service such as child care (i.e. BRASS 211 or 212) but not personally providing the actual service. In these cases the SS worker should log to case management (in this example BRASS 293 – Child Care Case Management) while the actual child care cost is a purchased service.
- Total expenditures (purchased + staff provided)

Staff Provided Service Cost Per Hour

- The current SEAGR bulletin, #14-32-04, Attachment B discusses hours of staff service. It states in part: A standard definition of hours of staff services used to allocate Social Services Administration is very important. Consistency among counties, comparability of average staff costs, and even some program grant earnings depend on staff hours reported.
- What is the staff provided average cost per hour used for? Financial Operations Division (FOD) does not use this rate in determining grant allocations, payments, etc. For FOD report purposes it puts administrative expenses into the BRASS codes where social service staff have recorded their service time. It is also calculated as a tool for agencies to use for use in billing other departments or agencies for services. It is also useful in helping to see if your staff are claiming (time reporting) for all eligible BRASS codes. (This will be discussed later.)
- I have been told that your staff provided average cost per hour does not have to be used for billing for waivers – you should use your established rate. Does anyone know if this is correct or not?

SEAGR Average Cost Per Hour

12

County total overhead (cost pool) / Total Staff Hours = hourly rate

Hourly rate * hours in each BRASS code = estimated staff expenditures

Logging too few hours = high cost per hour

- ✓ Logging only billable? Worker does not have to be face-to-face with client to claim BRASS code activity.

Logging too many hours = low cost per hour

- ✓ Are workers logging 8 hours a day? It's not likely that any worker will have worked 8 full hours on BRASS code activities.

Hours to be reported

- ✓ Line social service staff (see SEAGR bulletin 14-32-04, attachment B2, for staff definition) need to record time when they can to a BRASS code.
- ✓ 100% of BRASS code defined activities does not necessarily = 100% of staff time. There are no BRASS codes for lunch breaks, coffee breaks, etc.

SEAGR Average Cost Per Hour – continued

13

- ✓ Staff does not have to be face to face with a client to record time.
- ✓ Know your BRASS codes. Most workers will only use 5 – 6 of the 179 codes!
- ✓ Must be consistent in logging hours.

Hours of staff service: In some cases a SS worker is setting up delivery of a purchased service such as child care (BRASS 211 or 212) but not personally providing the actual service. In these cases the SS worker should log to case management (in this example BRASS 293 – Child Care Case Management) while the actual child care cost is a **PURCHASED SERVICE**.

Estimated staff expenditures have several limitations –

- ✓ Overhead costs are shown under staff expenditures, yet some of these costs would logically be used to administer and supervise purchased services activity. (If Director decides to fire all staff because staff expenditures are high! – this may be why they are high!)
- ✓ Usually a single rate (cost per hour) is being used for all the county’s BRASS codes. But a service provided by a SS worker with a Masters in Social Work is more costly than a service provided by a lower paid case aide. One hour of staff time is most probably not equal between different BRASS codes. BRASS code 146 is probably more than 101.

SEAGR Average Cost Per Hour – continued

14

SEAGR Average Cost per Hour Scenarios

Cost pool stays the same – staff hours changed

Total Cost Pool	Total Staff Hours	Cost Per Hour
\$6,500	100.00	\$65.00
\$6,500	125.00	\$52.00
\$6,500	75.00	\$86.67

*consider this the base

An **increase** in staff hours **decreases** the cost per hour

A **decrease** in staff hours **increases** the cost per hour

Cost pool changed – staff hours stayed the same

Total Cost Pool	Total Staff Hours	Cost Per Hour
\$6,500	100.00	\$65.00
\$7,500	100.00	\$75.00
\$5,500	100.00	\$55.00

*consider this the base

An **increase** in Total Cost Pool **increases** the cost per hour

A **decrease** in Total Cost Pool **decreases** the cost per hour

SEAGR Average Cost Per Hour – continued

15

Cost pool and staff hours change

Total Cost Pool	Total Staff Hours	Cost Per Hour
\$6,500	100.00	\$65.00
\$6,000	125.00	\$48.00
\$6,000	75.00	\$80.00
\$7,000	75.00	\$93.33
\$8,000	125.00	\$64.00

*consider this the base

A **decrease** in Total Cost Pool and an **increase** in staff hours = **decreases** the cost per hour

A **decrease** in Total Cost Pool and a **decrease** in hours = **increases** the cost per hour

An **increase** in Total Cost Pool and a **decrease** in staff hours = **increases** the cost per hour

An **increase** in Total Cost Pool and an **increase** in staff hours = **decreases** the cost per hour

Time Reporting

16

- I've been asked multiple times about 100% time reporting – is it required? The short answer is **NO – DHS does not require 100% time reporting**. What DHS does require is that all county social service workers log their time to a BRASS code when they provide a service that is defined in the BRASS manual.
- The Social Service Information System (SSIS) uses BRASS codes as the basis for tracking county social service activity. Time reporting is how SSIS knows that a social worker performed a particular BRASS service with a particular client on an exact date.
- Social Service staff have many responsibilities and one of those is to earn some of the funding that pays for their position and the services that they provide to clients. Workers with different assignments have access to different uncapped federal and state revenue (CW-TCM, MH-TCM, Waiver & AC, LTCC, RSC, VADD-TCM).

Time Reporting – Timely & Accurate

17

- Timely and accurate reporting by staff is important for several reasons:
 - Time reporting is used to generate reports through which counties earn their capped grant allocations and is used to document trigger events so that Targeted Case Management (TCM) is billed to DHS or Managed Care Organizations. Time reporting is also used to document other services so that they can be billed.
 - Through the SEAGR allocation process, staff-provided services (expenditures) are allocated a portion of overhead (administrative) costs.
 - The social service cost pool (which includes staff time) is used in the TCM rate setting process.

Time Reporting & Targeted Case Management

18

- TCM is part of Medicaid and is an uncapped federal revenue. It is primarily used for case management to specific populations – Child Welfare (CW-TCM), Children’s Mental Health (CMH-TCM), Adult Mental Health (AMH-TCM) and Vulnerable Adult or Developmental Disabilities (VADD-TCM).
- TCM rates are calculated. The purpose of the rate setting process is to set a rate for each target group that reflects the county’s cost of providing case management services on a monthly basis.
- A basic formula is used for all targeted case management rates. Information used to determine the rates include the SSTS cost pool (from the social service fund report, DHS-2556), results from the SSTS and the average number of all clients receiving case management services provided by agency and RTC Staff. **(Which means staff time!)**
- Bottom line – time reporting is accountability of staff and hours (time). **Time = \$**

Tracking Social Worker Fiscal Performance

19

- Why do time reporting? To help in tracking performance!
- Otter Tail County 2011 stopped doing time reporting. Comparing 2010 and 2012 to 2011, the notice a drop in their monthly average contacts and their monthly eligible contact which of course resulted in a **loss of TCM revenues. (They calculated an average direct time decrease of 29%.)**
- There are many time reports available in SSIS under Tools/General Reports.
- Check with your neighboring counties and see what reports they use or what spreadsheets that they have created and would be willing to share with you.

Thank you!

20

I would like to thank the following people for your help in creating this presentation (e-mails, explanations, discussions, answers) and/or for providing me with copies of your documents – I appreciate your help!

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