

LIAISON REPORT

AGENCY: MICA **LIAISONS:** Lisa McCoy, Jacob Zirklebach, Sue Draper 10-30-17

Need for Program

MICA's programs are Story County Dental Clinic, Child Dental, Story County Emergency Food Pantry, Steps to Success and Fluoride Varnish. The target population are low-income, uninsured patients as well as insured by Medicaid and other income based insurances from their mid-year report. These services are connected closely to Human Services.

Around 80% visits to their one of a kind Dental Clinic were from Story County and 15% from Boone County. The top priority for funding is to raise more dollars for the Dental Clinic due to Medicaid pre-authorizations denied in July and even more reductions in retroactive payments in October.

The Food Pantry volume of more families coming in is increasing: May 2016 was 270 and this past May was 346. August was 363. This Food Pantry is unique because it is open 40 hours a week Mon-Fri. Families can come once a calendar month to pick up food.

The Steps for Success program is important because it connects families with other services through the family development plan. Plus, this group of experts works on relationships and family planning for the future.

Concern is that these recent changes in Medicare with no retroactive payments will bankrupt many families which will increase the volume of families coming to the Dental Clinic and Food Pantry. Both IDPH and Gloria are working to connect directly with Medicaid contacts to advocate for our local families on recent negative changes.

Program Strengths

A major strength that contributes most importantly to the program/service outcomes at MICA is Gloria. She has been advocating for 5 years on how better to serve our local families.

Dentist Dr. Walker has been with the Dental Clinic for 4 years and works with students to train them. People return to see the dental team and they see 4,000 appointments a year. Local dentists volunteer some too.

Josie shared that the Food Pantry is grateful for their longstanding volunteer base and assistance from ISU students. They have 2 paid staff.

Program Weaknesses

Managing and searching for grant dollars takes a lot of time. Gloria would like to hire a part-time person to assist with this function which will free her up for other important functions in her leadership role.

MICA is also working on strategies to consistently engage this community to support them with food donations throughout the year.

Food Pantry team are working towards creating a process to have pre-made food bags ready for family pick up which could increase their efficiency. Could the ISU engineering students assist in developing this new process and advising what will need to be in place to sustain it?

Financial Outlook

As stated above, the top priority for MICA is funding for the Dental Clinic to sustain operations due to reduced Medicaid reimbursements. Gloria was meeting soon with United Way and also direct with a Medicare contact to discuss options and concerns.

While the fee structure ensures that their patients can afford the care they need, it creates a gap in funding. The Dental Clinic only accepts one Dental Wellness Plan – Delta Dental and the reimbursement rates are very low.

Internal Management Practices

Gloria is a strong leader with several years of experience as well as very active in attending ASSET meetings.

Josie, the Story County Director, has been with MICA for almost a year and has good ideas to improve services like pre-made food bags and how they can buy their food from Des Moines Food Pantry cheaper.

Agency Suggestions/Comments

Find ways to have meaningful dialog with Medicaid decision makers on how the recent no retroactive payment changes may bankrupt many families.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Any funding that ASSET can provide will be very timely and much needed for MICA and our low-income families impacted by recent Medicaid reductions in payment.

Dental work should be in reach for all who need it and this one of a kind operation allows that to happen.

The necessary and quality services that the MICA team provides every day has a real impact on the lives of many people in assisting them to be self-sufficient.