**ENERGY ASSISTANCE**

 **BPRO MEETING MINUTES**

**June 13, 2019**

**Meeting Facilitator:** Phoebe Wright, Committee Chair

**Speakers:** Catherine Pond and Angela Ector Home Office Consultants

 Andrea Gregg EAP Program Manager

**Attendees:** 40 in person at Central Regional Office,

 35 participated by telephone

Video conferencing was not operational

Andrea Gregg – announced she will be moving to another position within Social Services and will no longer be the EAP Program Manager. She also stated she and her staff are very supportive of BPRO and the EAP Committee and hopes the committee will continue having great participation so that the program continues to grow.

Catherine Pond and Angela Ector presenters

Three handouts were provided: Power point titled BPRO Energy Assistance Committee Meeting, Correcting EAP errors and a one page Credit Authorization By-Pass process

Cooling starts Saturday 6/15 through CommonHelp

Walk in starts 6/17/19 – however if applications are received a few days prior, agencies may accept them, date stamp with 6/17/19. If received early, they cannot be registered in VaCMS with an application date prior to 6/17.

Be sure to review the application:

 Are there vulnerable persons in the home?

What are they requesting? – be sure to enter ALL types they request.

What equipment do they already have and is it operable? Must have some type even if just a

fan, to receive help on electric bill

The Cooling Assistance application has been updated, weatherization questions added, a some formatting changes. The applications are now available on Fusion. Older versions of the application may be accepted.

Performance measures questions on applications– if the client answered the questions on the application please enter their answers in VaCMS as this helps with pre-approval fuel apps. If the client does not answer them, this does not affect their eligibility for assistance.

DMIS – scan only the required documents listed in the documentation guide on Fusion. Do not print and then scan VaCMS screen shots, you do not need to upload spider searches. If your agency is scanning old documents, please label them well in VaCMS so that they are easily identified. Old security deposits and warranty that did not come over from old system should be documented in narrative. SVES or income verification used should be uploaded. Case monitoring is done in VaCMS so all required documents should be uploaded.

Vulnerability criteria – age 60 or older, disabled by SSA or MDU, age 5 or younger, 100% disabled veteran. There is no quick denial, you need to complete all screens and case will fail. If individuals have not been declared disabled for EAP purposes, you should refer them to their energy provider to see if they can have a medical waiver put on their account.

Budget plan bills – pay the highest amount. See slide 6 of the presentation for examples.

Cooling assistance component screen: Actual Bill Amount field – please complete this field with the total account balance, never leave it blank. The amount put in this field is for reporting purposes and will not affect the amount of your approval.



BEFORE you authorize – click on the eligibility summary tabs at the top of the screen to review the information you have entered: Is the income correct, HH size correct, is the vendor correct, the benefit amount correct? Entering comments on this screen will print on the notice to the clients. It’s good to use this space to provide more details to the client if needed. See slide 7

Credit Authorization By-Pass process - If the payment has gone to the incorrect vendor, the LDSS will have to cover the approval from local agency funds. Be sure you are reviewing the vendor information, especially for by pass vendors prior to authorization.

Be sure to complete the client additional information page disability field for disabled individuals. If not completed, your case may fail. Some stated this field reverts to blank with subsequent requests so check eligibility tabs for correct information. Please let the consultants know if you see this happening, as they may want you to submit tickets it can get resolved.

Second bills should be treated as new applications. The new application date is the date the bill is received; review the information prior to cert/auth. Be sure you do a case narrative for the subsequent bill requests. See slide 9

DO NOT FAX CA’S TO VENDORS! There is no 48-hour timeliness notification for Cooling. Vendors must wait to receive the CA in the mail. Faxing CA’s can cause duplicate services being provided. DO NOT print the CA and then suppress it. Allow it to go through central print.

If the Customer is approved for installation and they take their approval notice to the vendor to pick up the equipment. The vendor should not be giving the client the equipment. If the client wants to change to pick up, they need to contact their worker, the worker needs to close the install per policy and reapprove for pick up, a new CA will generate for the correct amounts.

Review Itemized bills attached to the CA – do not just pay it without reviewing, must be itemized, and must show labor. For install, you should see AC model info. The warranty of at least 2 years is required. If the vendor puts less than 1 year, you need to contact the vendor to verify and if it truly is less than 2 years, contact Sandra Spady, vendor coordinator, if it is less than 2 years as the vendor will have to cover the additional year. Slide10

All applications must be registered in VaCMS by the end of each week. Review pending by component reports, check early and often. Applications left pending at the end of the program that should have been approved, will have to be paid with local funds.

Suggestions were made to organize your applications to help with processing and cut down on errors. Sort your applications and second requests by date, then by vendor so that you work on one vendor applications at a time. Put applications that will be denied in a separate stack. Also working on one type of request at a time may also assist you with getting them done, for example work on all the bill payments for Dominion customers, then the repair request, etc. Applications and second bill requests should be processed in date order. So review the apps/bills on hand for the day then organize into categories before processing.

For CAB (credit authorization bypass) vendors, no CA is issued, they only receive the payments. You are authorizing and paying at the same time. It is Critical that you always check vendor name and amount prior to authorization, as your local agency will have to pay the vendor and request reimbursement. Workers are required to log into the CAB vendors website to see verify what is currently owed on accounts.

See Correcting EAP Errors power point for detailed instructions on making corrections.

Pledges are not required with Cooling however if the client does have a disconnect you can put in a pledge AFTER the case is approved in VaCMS.

Pending by component report – slide 15 – review often

Check My Workspace for applications

Unpaid by component report – slide 16 – review and contact vendor if not returned within 30 days. There may be issues causing the delay in service being provided.

If you have vendors who would like to participate, refer them to Sandra Spady.

Workers CANNOT chose the vendor for a client. You should print the approved vendor list for your locality from VaCMS and give it to the client and have them select one.

All client contact must be documented in case comments – example: you called client to ask which vendor they want to use or to answer and unanswered questions on the application. You must document this contact and their answers.

EAP workers should be referring clients to other programs/services, for example: SNAP, Medicaid, meals on wheels, vehicle for change, Salvation Army, weatherization, etc.

Dominion is offering energy efficient refrigerators – refer them to Dominion.

They recommend doing vendor fairs or community outreach.

Troubleshooting – slide 18 – detailed steps on correct steps to take to resolve problems. There are transaction guides on Fusion for specific problems. When a ticket is need, please contact your consultant prior to submitting the ticket as they may want to you reference another ticket.

The newest EAP Consultant is Ursula Coleman-Walker!! Her contact information can be found on Fusion.

There was some discussion regarding the call center not getting complete information from the client, such as no SSN’s, not all HH members being put on the application, no phone numbers, etc. If you find you receive a lot of incomplete applications, please notify your consultant.

Everyone is encouraged to renew their BPRO memberships in July so that they remain on the EAP distribution list.

The new EAP Chair is Denise Morris with Greene DSS!!! The Next EAP meeting will be held at CRO September 12th.