

Report on
Elderplan FIDA Participant Advisory Committee and Feedback Session
December 17, 2015, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Brooklyn, NY

Elderplan conducted a combined Participant Advisory Committee and Feedback Session (which we referred to as a Town Hall) for our FIDA Participants on December 17, 2015. The meeting was held at Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn (part of the MJHS family). A conference line was also made available for all participants who preferred to dial-in.

ELDERPLAN FIDA TOWN HALL MEETING

The event was designed to educate, engage and obtain feedback from Elderplan FIDA participants. Each of the covered areas included Q&A:

- a brief overview of the benefit offered by our FIDA plan, including newly covered benefits
- a discussion about the role of your Care Manager
- valuable information about preventive screenings and vaccinations
- a recap of the Plan's performance to date
- an open discussion where participants were encouraged to ask additional questions or offer comments about their experiences with Elderplan FIDA.

Midway through the Town Hall, we took a Bingo break offering participants a little fun and opportunity to share stories with each other. Lunch was served at the conclusion of the session.

In addition, as follow up to the discussion about the importance of preventive screenings and vaccinations, an RN was on-site to provide free flu shots to Participants.

Recruitment of Participants

Elderplan was highly committed to recruiting participants for the Town Hall session. Invitations were mailed to the homes of all Elderplan FIDA participants and posted on the Elderplan website. Care Managers spoke with participants about the Town Hall during their monthly phone calls and the Call Center conducted proactive outreach.

One week prior to the Town Hall, Elderplan had successfully recruited 16 Participants:

- 13 participants agreed to attend attending in-person (7 of the 13 members requested their aides also attend)
- 1 participant delegated 2 family members to attend on their behalf
- 2 participants requested opportunity to dial-in

The 16 participants accounted for approximately 5% of our membership. They represented all five Boroughs of NYC, as well as Nassau County. Transportation was offered to all Participants and an accompanying home health aide.

Attendance

Given the age and frailty of many of our participants, there was a significant falloff in actual attendance. On December 17th, we had five FIDA Participants, and the son and daughter of a sixth. The Town Hall attendees came from the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island. All attendees spoke English. Five were women and two were men. Two brought home health aides with them. Two had also attended the first FIDA PAC, which was held June 17, 2015.

THE PROGRAM

Introduction

Diane Ashley, Vice President from Elderplan, welcomed everyone to the Plan's second Participant Advisory Committee meeting. In addition to introducing the panel members from Elderplan, she introduced the Ombudsman, Carrie Zoubul, Associate Director of ICAN, who attended by phone.

At the start of the program, Participants were given a brief history of MJHS, how Elderplan was one of the original social HMOs and how we continue to carry on a tradition of compassion, dignity and respect first established by the Four Brooklyn Ladies when they founded MJHS in 1907. Attendees were also told about HomeFirst, our managed long term care plan. Many Participants acknowledged awareness of HomeFirst. In fact, all members had been transferred from HomeFirst to Elderplan FIDA.

Before proceeding with the program, Participants were encouraged to ask questions and share their thoughts at the conclusion of each section of the program.

FIDA Benefits and Services

Frank Polanco, Assistant Vice President from Elderplan, explained the recent change in benefits offered by Elderplan FIDA. Specifically, this included the change in Elderplan's pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) that will take place starting January 1, 2016. CVS/Caremark will replace Envision and Orchard for prescriptions and mail service. Members should expect to receive their new cards in the coming weeks.

In addition to receiving a new ID card for the PBM, Participants will get an Extra Care Card, which Participants can use to get a 20% discount on any CVS OTC product upon enrolling.

Participants were also told, if they had questions in the future, that they could refer to their Annual Notice of Change or call Participant Services if they prefer.

After the presentation, the floor was opened up to the group for questions. Participants asked questions about the new PBM and their network of pharmacies. Since CVS/Caremark is the new provider, some participants assumed that they were restricted to getting their drugs through CVS. Elderplan clarified that CVS/Caremark has an extensive network that includes most pharmacies in the current network, and they are not restricted to getting their prescriptions filled at CVS locations. Participants were encouraged to speak with Elderplan staff directly during the break if they had any questions about their current pharmacy or the new PBM network.

Role of a Care Manager

Polina Voskoboynik, Care Manager, spoke to participants about the different ways Care Managers can be of service to participants while enrolled in the FIDA plan. For example, the Care Manager may act as an intermediary between participants and their primary care physician or other caregivers; handle gaps in care in the event of a hospitalization; to set up an Inter-Disciplinary Team (IDT) meetings; and to discuss the care that participants are receiving. Participants were urged to connect with their care manager by dialing participant services and requesting to speak with their Care Manager.

After the presentation, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions or comment. A participant expressed dissatisfaction with their PCP, and the PCP's lack of interest in attending IDT meetings. Elderplan acknowledged that IDT meetings are one of the unique attributes and benefits of the FIDA product; they discussed Elderplan's efforts to reach out to physicians and other providers to educate them about what it means to be part of a FIDA plan. Elderplan acknowledged that there has been a period of adjustment for all stakeholders, since it is a new product. Therefore, it may take some time for all stakeholders to get accustomed to the requirements. However, if the participant at any time feels that the physician is not meeting their needs in other ways, or they feel uncomfortable with the physician delivering any aspect of their care, Elderplan is available to help them select another physician within the network.

Participants also asked about physician selection, and how they may go about selecting a PCP. Elderplan staff responded by saying that a physician can be selected using a number of criteria, including geography, gender, and specialty. Participants may use the online directory available on the Elderplan website, as well as request a copy of the provider directory, which can be mailed to participants free of charge. They were also encouraged to contact Participant Services or their Care Manager with help finding an appropriate physician.

Taking Control of Your Health: The Importance of Health Screenings

Dr. Vincent Marchello, Chief Medical Officer from Elderplan hosted a segment on the importance of health screenings and how early intervention can prevent future health problems. He also addressed the importance of vaccinations to everyone in attendance.

Dr. Marchello started the presentation by going over the topics typically covered during an annual PCP appointment. This includes the types of tests that are conducted (blood glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, height, weight) and typical questions that are asked by the doctor (nutrition, smoking and drinking habits, physical activity, among others). There was a discussion about why those topics are covered. In addition, it was stressed that if a participant has a PCP as well as a number of specialists they see regularly, it is important to communicate this with your PCP so that your care is well coordinated.

The topic then shifted to vaccinations. This includes how they are developed, and how different strains are chosen every year based on past data and educated guesses. Because influenza is responsible for many deaths per year, it is important to get the flu vaccine annually. Dr. Marchello also responded to a comment about last year's flu vaccine not being as effective. He explained that even if the strains in the vaccine aren't an exact match to the flu that season, participants will still reap the benefits because it will help reduce the severity of the flu.

In addition to the flu vaccine, other types of vaccines were reviewed: pneumococcal, tetanus-diphtheria and shingles. Participants over the age of 65 are encouraged to get the pneumococcal vaccine; the tetanus-diphtheria every ten years; and the shingles vaccine after the age of 60.

Preventive care measures were also discussed, including an aspirin regimen, multivitamins (consider strongly when one is ill, since it's likely that one is not eating and therefore unable to obtain adequate nutrition), and calcium and vitamin D supplements. Elderplan encouraged participants to talk with their doctor if considering any of these preventive care measures.

Lastly, health screenings and recommended frequencies of breast, colon, cervical, and prostate cancer screenings were covered. The presentation concluded with the note that it is always easier to address a small problem quickly before it evolves into a bigger problem in the future.

The interactive presentation sparked a lively discussion among participants. At the end of the presentation, a participant asked about other health supplements such as collagen that reportedly increased mobility. Dr. Marchello explained that there are limited studies currently available on collagen supplements. He did suggest that a known intervention to increase mobility is isometrics. Elderplan staff followed up with the participant on where they can obtain information on isometric exercises.

Bingo

As a break in the program, Katherine Santiago, Community Relations Specialist from Elderplan led 2 rounds of Bingo for all attendees.

Elderplan FIDA Performance Update

After the break, the program focused on FIDA's performance to date. Diane Ashley described the slow growth of FIDA plans statewide since their launch in January 2015, but emphasized the commitment of NY State and Elderplan to this new and important plan.

As of December 1, 2015, Elderplan had 324 enrollments in our FIDA plan with 303 disenrollments since the plan's inception.

Participants were reminded that we're here for them should they have any questions. Our Participant Services line was answered within 11 seconds on average, and the average call lasted approximately 6 minutes. There were 5 FIDA-related appeals during the period and 17 grievances. The grievances were related to transportation (8), quality of home care (3), and 6 grievances related to other services.

At the conclusion of this segment, a number of comments were made and questions raised. One participant commented that they have been having trouble with their transportation; Elderplan's Director of Vendor Contracts, as well as a representative from Elderplan's transportation vendor, Logisticare, attended the meeting. The Elderplan staff member and Logisticare representative discussed the participant's concern following the conclusion of the presentation. Several participants had stated that they also had some issues with transportation in the past, but noted that it had improved more recently.

Another Participant commented that they have had a positive relationship with their Care Manager; they reported that the Care Manager called them back right away and has yet to have a negative experience with them.

One other Participant commented that they are having trouble getting their glasses prescription filled; Elderplan staff spoke with the member after the meeting to obtain additional background. The participant was later contacted and provided with the information they requested.

Lastly, a participant had a question about the OTC card, asking if they get an OTC card every month. Elderplan clarified to the Participant and attendees that the OTC card is replenished with funds automatically; therefore, participants should keep their cards, which they can continue to use while enrolled in the plan.

Conclusion of Program

At the end of the program, Elderplan invited Ms. Carrie Zoubul, FIDA Ombudsman and Associate Director of ICAN to speak briefly to participants about the services offered by the Ombudsman office. Participants were also encouraged to write down the FIDA Participant Ombudsman contact information:

FIDA Participant Ombudsman
1-844-614-8800
Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM
Online: icannys.org

In closing, all participants were thanked for choosing Elderplan FIDA and for traveling to join us for the Town Hall Meeting. Participants were given the contact information for Elderplan FIDA Participant Services:

Elderplan FIDA Participant Services
1-855-462-3167
TTY: 711
8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, 7 Days a Week

Lunch and Informal Conversation

Members of the Elderplan panel and staff joined the participants for lunch. During this time, Elderplan staff followed up with the members who had voiced any concerns during the presentation. We also had the opportunity to discuss what participants liked about the Elderplan FIDA.

During this time, additional questions were raised. The son who attended on behalf of a participant requested a list of network hospitals that are in the participant's area. The son's information was taken, and the staff member followed up with a list of in-network hospitals via email. At the conclusion of the Town Hall meeting and lunch, all participants were provided transportation so they would be delivered safely back to their homes.