

Report on
Elderplan FIDA Participant Advisory Committee/Town Hall Meeting
June 17, 2015, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Brooklyn, NY

Elderplan conducted its first Participant Advisory Committee or Town Hall Meeting for our FIDA Participants on June 17, 2015. The meeting was held at Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn (part of the MJHS family). Markowitz Consulting was retained to provide independent facilitation and reporting services to support Elderplan in conducting the first in an ongoing series of FIDA Participant feedback sessions.

ELDERPLAN FIDA TOWN HALL MEETING

The event was carefully designed to engage Elderplan FIDA Participants. The program included a brief overview of the valuable benefits offered by our FIDA plan, a recap of the Plan's performance to date and offered valuable information about Advance Directives. In addition, Participant questions and feedback about their experiences with Elderplan FIDA were encouraged. Midway through the Town Hall, a relaxing chair yoga session was conducted as a break. Lunch was served at the conclusion of the session.

Recruitment

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

One week prior to the Town Hall, Elderplan had successfully recruited 14 members, who planned to bring 11 guests, for a total of 25 attendees. The 14 Participants represented approximately 6% of our membership at the time and included representation from all five Boroughs of NYC.

Transportation was offered to all Participants and an accompanying family member or home health aide.

Attendance

Not surprising given the age and frailty of many of our Participants, there was a significant falloff in actual attendance. On June 17th, we had five FIDA Participants, and the husband of a sixth, at our first Elderplan FIDA Town Hall Meeting. This represented approximately 3% of our membership at the time. The Town Hall attendees came from the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. Five of the six attendees spoke English. The sixth spoke Spanish and was provided a translator during the Town Hall session and subsequent lunch. Four were women and two were men. Five brought home health aides with them. Three needed the assistance of a walker.

THE PROGRAM

Introduction

Felicia Dyer-Johnson, a Vice President from Elderplan, welcomed everyone to the Plan's first Participant Advisory Committee meeting or Town Hall. In addition to introducing the panel members from Elderplan, she introduced the Ombudsman, Elizabeth Siegel, a Staff Attorney from Empire Justice Center as well as the independent consultant who was going to facilitate the session.

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, most had actually been passively 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 brief section of the program.

FIDA Benefits and Services

David Sanquiche, an Assistant Director from Elderplan, explained the benefits offered by Elderplan FIDA and how they differ from other integrated and long term care programs. Specifically, this included the benefits of having an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT), development of a Person-Centered Service Plan (PCSP), behavioral health and substance abuse coverage, continuity of care protections, zero cost, coordination of Medicare and Medicaid home and community benefits, an integrated appeals and grievances process and the availability of Ombudsman resources. Elderplan also used the Town Hall setting as an opportunity to share with Participants that we will be adding an over-the-counter drug benefit this year.

Elderplan addressed questions and concerns raised by FIDA Participants at the conclusion of this segment, and even brought up commonly asked questions that Elderplan has received through Participant Services.

Many of the questions centered on the desire of Participants to retain their own doctors and confusion on their part, and potentially on the part of their physician, about FIDA coverage. Elderplan panel members indicated that we try very hard during the 90 transitional period, after they first enroll in FIDA, to add their physician to our network, if they are not already included. We also encouraged them to call Participant Services, at any time, if they have a problem or concern about continuing to see their physician or if their physician tells them there is a problem.

The Participants also had a number of questions about the composition and advantages of IDT meetings. As part of the answer, the panel members explained that an IDT meeting is a terrific benefit of FIDA. Put in simple terms, it's an opportunity for Participants, along with a family member if they so choose, to sit down with everyone involved in their care (e.g. their physician or nurse practitioner, care manager, home health aide, social worker, etc.). The purpose is to make sure everyone is on the same page, working together to develop and fulfill their own personalized plan or PCSP. It's all with the goal of ensuring they receive the best possible care and achieve the best possible outcome.

Elderplan FIDA Performance Update

Felicia Dyer-Johnson 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 March 31, 2015, Elderplan had 61 enrollments in our FIDA plan with 16 disenrollments. Participants were reminded that we're here for them should they have any questions. In fact, we let everyone know that our Participant Services line was not only answered, on average, within 12 seconds, but that the average call actually lasted 7 minutes. There were no appeals during the period and only two grievances. Both were about transportation and were resolved to the Participant's satisfaction.

At the conclusion of this segment, no questions were raised. However, one FIDA Participant commented, through his translator, that he was a transplant patient and how very satisfied he has been with the Elderplan FIDA program.

Chair Yoga Session

Dr. Rene David Alkalay, from Genesis Tree of Life conducted the Yoga session. This not only provided a relaxing break but also an opportunity for the FIDA Participants, their aides, the Ombudsman, and the Elderplan panel members to share some healthy learning, stretching and laughing together. Everyone seemed engaged and refreshed.

Advance Care Planning

Dr. Vincent Marchello, Chief Medical Officer from Elderplan hosted a segment on the importance of Advance Directives and the important role they play in giving the individual control over what decisions are made – or not made – should they faced with a health crisis. This engaging presentation included descriptions of health care proxies, living wills and advance directives. It also included stories that demonstrated how these simple, but important, documents made a major difference in quality of life for the patients involved.

Health Care Proxy forms were distributed to everyone in attendance, including the family members and home health aides. Some of the guests started to decline the form saying it didn't apply to them. This presented a perfect opportunity for Dr. Marchello to point out that any one of us – regardless of age – could be in an accident or face an unexpected health crisis.

The lively discussion engaged not only the FIDA Participants, but also the Elderplan Panel Members and the Ombudsman, who provided an attorney's perspective. As part of the discussion, the panel reviewed when to complete forms, where to keep the originals, who should have copies, what conversations are important to have with whom, and when. The Ombudsman reminded everyone that it is often wise to consult an attorney, reinforcing that they are likely eligible for free legal services. The Ombudsman provided the following contact information:

FIDA Participant Ombudsman
1-844-614-8800
TTY: 711
Online: icannys.org

Final Questions and Feedback

At the conclusion of the Town Hall, Participants, their family members and home health aides were asked if they had any additional questions or comments they'd like to share. No one had additional questions. One participant volunteered that the excellent package of materials she received when she joined the Plan covered everything very well.

Conclusion of Program

In closing, all Participants were thanked for choosing Elderplan FIDA and all attendees were thanked for traveling to join us for our first ever Town Hall Meeting. We also let everyone know that we would be hosting similar events quarterly and they would, of course, be invited.

Before concluding, Participants were once again given the contact information for Ombudsman Services along with 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, along with the two consultants from Markowitz Consulting joined the Participants for lunch. No new issues came up. One Participant did say that even though her doctor did not want to join the network, that she liked Elderplan FIDA so much that she was going to stay. All Participants were asked if they'd be open to coming to future Town Hall meetings or feedback sessions. They all said yes.

At the conclusion of the Town Hall meeting and lunch, all Participants were provide transportation safely back to their homes.