

January 14, 2022

Melissa Blackwell, MSW
Public Health Advisor Division of State and Community Systems Development
Center for Mental Health Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14E73B
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: Spending Plan Proposal for the Implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021,
Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)

Dear Ms. Blackwell,

The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), submitted the **Spending Plan Proposal for the Implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)** dated July 30, 2021 to the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). AHCCCS will be removing language related to the digital locker implementation due to the correspondence we received from CMHS; this is an unallowable expense.

AHCCCS is proposing to replace the digital identification wallet to increase the workforce development activities described in the plan in addition to additional activities for individuals designated with a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) and/or Serious Mental Illness (SMI). AHCCCS is requesting to remove the digital identification wallet from the plan. AHCCCS previously proposed to serve individuals with an SMI designation, including those who experience homelessness, may not have the proper identification documents that are required for social security applications, applying for benefits, and/or are required for access to housing, social, medical, and financial services. Mobile digital identity solutions through the use of digital wallet technology will assist individuals with applying for these benefits and/or services. The plan was to utilize \$200,000.00 of the total amount.

AHCCCS is requesting to utilize the \$200,000.00 to increase workforce development activities outlined in the plan including two additional projects including the Continuation of Early Childhood Service Intensity Instrument (ECSII) and Youth Advisory Training.

1. **Early Childhood Service Intensity Instrument (ECSII) Training.** The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) is the single agency able to provide the training and fidelity monitoring of the Early Childhood Service Intensity Instrument (ECSII), as AACAP is the sole owner of the assessment tool, training materials, and fidelity monitoring criteria.

According to AACAP, ECSII is a standardized tool used to determine the intensity of services needed for infants, toddlers, and children from ages 0-5 years. This instrument is

developmentally informed and has been created on the foundation of a System of Care approach -- embracing family-driven, youth-guided care that includes individualized strength-based and culturally sensitive service planning, supporting the use of intensive care coordination or wraparound planning teams when indicated, and providing a broad service array that includes natural supports as well as clinical services.

2. **Youth Advisory Training.** This training will (1) Promote access, equality, inclusion, and brave spaces for the celebration of diversity, through peer-based experiential learning, person-centered practices, and maximized collaboration efforts, designed to heighten knowledge, enhance skills, and foster individual life path planning, and growth; (2) Build capacity in youth and young adults (focused on ages 18-24 years old) who have a variety of disabilities, to prepare them to assume leadership roles, and provide peer-based services through peer-based training, navigation and support within Arizona, and beyond; and (3) Provide training for AHCCCS and Managed Care Organization leadership to engage young adults in meaningful leadership and engagement opportunities.

If you have additional questions, please contact Michelle Skurka at (602) 364-2111 or Michelle.Skurka@azahcccs.gov.

Sincerely,

Michelle Skurka

Michelle Skurka
Grants Administrator