

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System Review of Selected Behavioral Health Services

AHCCCS reported providing behavioral health services to more than 583,000 members in fiscal year 2021 and has contracted for assessments of its behavioral health performance and various services but did not ensure all peer specialists met qualification and supervision requirements, potentially jeopardizing the quality of services provided to members

Audit purpose

To determine whether AHCCCS ensured peer specialists who provide services to AHCCCS members met qualification and supervision requirements and provide information about the AHCCCS Housing Program, behavioral health-related committees and work groups, and behavioral health-related reporting requirements.

Key findings

AHCCCS:

- Provides integrated physical and behavioral health services to its eligible members through a managed care system, including peer support services provided by peer specialists, such as helping members identify needs and recovery goals, and reported providing behavioral health services to more than 583,000 members at a cost of over \$2.7 billion in fiscal year 2021.
- Has established various behavioral healthcare performance measures and contracts for independent assessments of these performance measures and the provision of other required behavioral health services, including services provided to members with a serious mental illness (SMI).
- Did not ensure that 21 of 23 peer specialists we reviewed met both State and federal qualification requirements to be a peer specialist and/or were supervised according to requirements, potentially jeopardizing the quality of peer support services provided to members.
- Has directed its contracted health plans to oversee the provision of peer support services provided by peer specialists but did not have a process for ensuring this oversight occurs.
- Provides housing rental subsidies to eligible AHCCCS members with an SMI and some members with a general mental health and/or substance use disorder through its Housing Program. As of March 2022, approximately 2,300 members were enrolled in the Housing Program, and an additional 4,134 members were on the Housing Program waitlist.
- Contracts with a Housing Administrator to manage and operate its Housing Program and has established performance measures for assessing Housing Administrator performance.
- Administers various committees, councils, task forces, and workgroups related to behavioral healthcare services.
- Provides several reports to the Legislature, Joint Legislative Budget Committee, and Governor that include information on behavioral healthcare expenditures and specific behavioral health areas/programs in response to statutory and session law requirements.

Key recommendation

- AHCCCS should develop and implement processes for monitoring its contracted health plans' oversight of peer specialists to help ensure they meet qualifications and receive supervision as required.