

THE PATH AHEAD

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 2
TMG'S CITIZEN ADVISORY
COUNCIL EDITION

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Get to Know TMG's
Citizen Advisory Council
- 4 Advice for Common
IRIS Program Questions
- 7 Your Voice Matters!
Share Your Thoughts with TMG



tmg[®]

GET TO KNOW TMG'S CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Sharing your thoughts and voicing your opinion is a powerful way to help spark the changes that you want to experience in life. From sharing your food preferences to talking to your family about moving into your own place, your voice matters, and everyone deserves to be heard. When you let others know how you feel and what you want, it's an opportunity for positive changes to happen.

Speaking up is also a way to advocate for yourself and others. It's how laws and policies change in ways that grant you more protections, rights, and the help you need and deserve to live more safely and independently.

As your IRIS partner, TMG highly values what you have to say about your experiences with us and with the IRIS program. This is how we learn what's working for you and what changes you feel should be made.

We hear about important issues on your mind in different ways: When you share your thoughts with your IRIS Consultant or other TMG staff and when you complete your IRIS annual surveys to tell us how we're doing.

TMG's Citizen Advisory Council is another way we learn about what's important to the people we partner with. The Citizen Advisory Council is a group of TMG participants and guardians of TMG participants. They have different reasons for joining the Council, but they all share a common goal: To make the IRIS program and TMG's services better for themselves and others.

The Citizen Advisory Council helps TMG in many ways. They share their stories, challenges, successes, and ideas with TMG staff. They provide honest and constructive feedback on TMG's performance, policies, and procedures. They suggest

improvements and ideas that could help people be successful in the IRIS program. They also help TMG spread the word about the IRIS program to others who might be interested and eligible to join the program.

Stacy Ellingen is a business owner and self-advocate. She has been on the Council since it started in 2019.



Stacy Ellingen, member of
TMG's Citizen Advisory Council

“The main reason I enjoy the Citizen Advisory Council is because TMG actually listens to feedback from the members and takes action on it,” says Stacy. “They look into every issue that’s brought up and do their best to improve or solve the issue.”

The Council members also benefit from being part of the Citizen Advisory Council. They learn about the IRIS program and TMG on a deeper level, as well as connect with other Council members and TMG staff. Being on the Council also helps members to develop their advocacy and leadership skills. But most importantly, it helps Council members feel empowered and respected by having a voice in the IRIS program and TMG’s services.

Pam DeVuyst, from Kenosha, joined the Citizen Advisory Council as a self-advocate two years ago. She loves advocating for people in many different ways,.



Mary Ann Tellock, member of TMG’s Citizen Advisory Council and her son Jason

“Being on the Council has helped me to understand TMG and the IRIS program better. It helps me know what policy changes are coming and what others in IRIS are advocating for,” says Pam. “The Citizen Advisory Council is a wonderful way to meet people passionate about advocating for themselves and the disability community.”

Of course, one of the most exciting things about being on the Citizen Advisory Council is that self-

advocates and guardians have the opportunity to help bring about important changes to TMG by sharing their voice.

Mary Ann Tellock is a mother of an individual enrolled with TMG. She says that it’s important for her to educate others about autism and other disabilities, and to advocate for her son and others.

“Hearing directly from the people using the program is the best way for TMG to know what is working, what is not working, what changes are needed and what new options need to be developed,” says Mary Ann. “I encourage anyone who can to join the Citizen Advisory Council!”

We want to thank all of our past and current members of the Citizen Advisory Council who have given us their time and have shared their experiences and recommendations with the Council. We appreciate all that they do to make TMG and IRIS better for everyone who partners with us!

ADVICE FOR COMMON IRIS PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Thanks to the Citizen Advisory Council for helping us develop a list of common questions about IRIS that others in the program may also have!

What should I do when I receive my IRIS service plan in the mail?

The service authorizations on your IRIS service plan are the IRIS-approved services you have chosen. You will receive a copy of your IRIS service plan in the mail. Once you've received these, you'll need to complete a few more steps to finalize the process:

1. Make sure that the authorizations are accurate and reflect what you need and agreed upon with your IRIS Consultant. Feel free to have your IRIS Consultant or a trusted family member or friend look over the IRIS service plan and service authorizations with you.

2. If you find any errors in your plan, let your IRIS Consultant know. They will assist you to correct any errors.

3. Once you've looked over your plan and have confirmed that they are accurate, you'll need to sign the plan and return the signature page.

How do I make sure that I complete my Medicaid (MA) renewal on time?

When you first applied for Medicaid benefits, you gave the State information about things like your household size, income, and assets. To keep your benefits, you need to update that information every year. This process is called a renewal.

You'll receive notice about your renewal due dates in several different ways: By mail from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and by email and text from TMG. If you do not have email or text, TMG will send you a letter reminding you of your upcoming Medicaid renewal.

Be on the lookout for these reminders and complete the renewal process as soon as possible to make sure that you don't have gaps in your IRIS services.

There are several different ways that you can complete your renewal:

1. The fastest way to start is by using your account, which you can find at www.access.wi.gov or by using the MyACCESS mobile app.



**Watch Your Mailbox For Important
IRIS and Medicaid Documents!**

It's a good idea to log into your account and make sure your info is up to date to avoid missing your renewal notification and so that you can speed up the renewal process.

2. You may also complete and return the packet by mail, using the instructions included in your packet. Please note that the renewal process may not be as timely if you choose this method.

3. You can also contact your county's Income Maintenance agency or tribal agency to renew your benefits. Find your agency's contact information at dhs.wisconsin.gov/forwardhealth/imagency/. When calling, be sure to tell them you are enrolled in IRIS.

4. You may also renew in person at your local county or tribal agency. You can find the locations at dhs.wisconsin.gov/forwardhealth/imagency.

ADVICE FOR COMMON IRIS PROGRAM QUESTIONS

What advice do you have for someone to successfully manage their IRIS budget?

In IRIS, you can choose to purchase allowable services using your IRIS budget. This is called budget authority, and you're responsible for how your budget is spent. Here are tips to help you manage your budget.

1. Treat your IRIS budget like you would your bank account or checkbook. This means knowing how much money you have in your IRIS budget, as well as how much of your budget you spend on your care each month. While monthly expenses might fluctuate, it helps to be aware of what your average monthly costs are.

2. It's helpful to look over your monthly expense statements. This lets you make sure that you are paying for the services you have approved, at the amount you have approved. If you notice errors in these statements, you can work with your Fiscal Employment Agent (FEA) to make corrections.

3. It's important that you only spend what is in your budget. Sometimes your budget might look overspent, and this could be for different reasons. If you do not know why your budget looks overspent, ask your TMG IRIS Consultant for help to determine what happened so that you can get back on track.



4. The Department of Health Services determines your budget based on your needs in the Long-Term Care Functional Screen. Your IRIS budget can increase, decrease, or stay the same after an annual re-screen. Your IRIS Consultant will provide information and assistance to help you if your budget does change.

5. Remember that it's important to make sure you're using your budget to help you reach your goals and support outcomes.

Have any questions about these or any other IRIS-related topics? Then contact your TMG IRIS Consultant. They're happy to help!

Your Voice Matters! Share Your Thoughts with TMG

TMG's Citizen Advisory Council provides great advice and guidance on how TMG can continue making the IRIS experience even better for all IRIS participants. Now, we want to hear from you! We want to hear about your experience in IRIS and partnering with TMG. We also want to know what matters to you, and what changes you'd like to see from TMG and within the IRIS program.

Please take some time to visit the link below to share your thoughts with TMG. Please fill out the survey by **December 31, 2024**. Thanks in advance, and we look forward to reading your answers!

Visit bit.ly/4eCFS0N
or scan the QR code below to take the survey.



Interested in learning more about TMG's Citizen Advisory Council?
Reach out to Dan Krohn at dwkrohn@tmgwisconsin.com



2424 rimrock road, suite 230
fitchburg, wisconsin 53713
(844) 864-8987
info@tmgwisconsin.com
tmgwisconsin.com

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON WI
PERMIT #2783

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

A lot has been happening on TMG's Facebook and LinkedIn pages! Have you visited them lately?

There, you can read up on important news and events, learn about others who are living self-determined lives and see what TMG has been up to all across the state. Be sure to share your favorite posts and become part of a broader self-determined community in Wisconsin!



facebook.com/
TMGWisconsin



linkedin.com/company/
TMGMadisonWI