

**Maricopa County Arizona  
Department of Public Health**

**Assessment of the Administrative Agency  
Ryan White Part A Grant  
Phoenix EMA  
July 2010**

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## Purpose of the Report

Knowledge Capital Alliance, Inc. (KCA) was engaged to conduct an evaluation of the Administrative Agency (AA) for Grant Year 2010 as mandated by the Ryan White Care Act (Sections 2602 and 2617). The focus of the 2010 assessment was: 1) the efficiency and effectiveness of the provider invoicing and payment process, and 2) the Administrative Agency's ability to implement the directives of the Ryan White Planning Council (RYPC). In addition, the 2010 assessment compares the data collected to the similar data collected for grant year 2009.

## Assessment Methodology

KCA conducted a three-phased evaluation process to perform this assessment of the Administrative Agency. The three phases were:

**Phase 1:** Interviews with the Administrative Agent and the Provider Relations & Contracts Administrator

**Phase 2:** Surveys of the Ryan White Service Providers and the Ryan White Planning Council

**Phase 3:** Reviews of Administrative Agency Processes, Reporting Mechanisms, and Performance Data

The three-phased evaluation process was conducted during June - July, 2010 in Maricopa County, Arizona.

## Findings

The findings of the 2010 Assessment of the Administrative Agency are reported in three parts:

Part 1: Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Service Provider Invoicing and Payment Process,

Part 2: Administrative Agency's Ability to implement the Directives of the Ryan White Planning Council

Part 3: Overall Survey Comments.

A complete listing of the Service Provider and RWPC survey questions, answers, and comments can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 at the end of this document. KCA received a response rate of 88% of the RWPC and 100% of the active Service Providers.

**Part 1 Findings: Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Service Provider Invoicing and Payment Process.** The average time to process a Service Provider invoice dropped from 43 days for grant year 2009 to 31 days for grant year 2010. This is a significant improvement and shows a continuous process improvement over the past two grant years. The finite metric for invoice processing is the contractual agreement to process invoices within 60 days of receipt. In grant year 2010, 391 of the 440 invoices submitted were processed within 60 days. Because the AA does not, currently, have the data points to determine when the invoices were accurately submitted, it is not possible to determine which late payments may be the fault of the AA and which late payments may not have been the fault of the AA. Much of the reason for this is explained in the following paragraph.

The Administrative Agency appears to diligently follow County and Federal guidelines for contracting and billing procedures. However the AA continues to be challenged during two different cycles 1) at the beginning of each grant year when contracts are granted and federal funds lag, and 2) the County fiscal year end accounting close out resulting in delayed invoice processing. When the federal funds are delayed, payments to Service Providers can be held up for several weeks. The fiscal year end delays also result in delays in payments to Service Providers as the County staff struggles to catch up. Although both of these issues are beyond the control of the AA, it is important to note that the AA is working to communicate these issues to the Service Providers and continue to work with the federal and county agencies to improve processes and reduce the impact on the Service Providers.

It is clear from the comments provided by both the RWPC members and the Service Providers that the AA has made significant improvements in its ability to process invoices in an efficient and timely manner. This ability has produced a positive working relationship between the RWPC, the Service Providers and the Administrative Agency.

**Part 2 Findings: Administrative Agency's Ability to implement the Directives of the Ryan White Planning Council.** A survey of the Planning Council gathered perceptions from the membership in two areas: 1) Did the Administrative Agency Implement the Directives of the RWPC in an accurate and timely manner? And, 2) Did the Administrative Agency accurately contract the funding allocated by the RWPC?

*RWPC Survey Results – Implementing Directives:* The RWPC strongly believes that the Administrative Agency has implemented the directives in an accurate and timely manner. The survey results showed that 91% of the RWPC members responding believe that the directives were implemented in a timely manner. This was up from 84% for the 2009 grant year. The survey results also showed that 93% of the RWPC members responding believe that the directives were implemented in an accurate manner. This was up from 84% for the 2009 grant year.

*RWPC Survey Results – Contract the Funding:* 88% of the RWPC members responding strongly believe that the Administrative Agency has accurately contracted the funding allocated by the RWPC.

**Part 3 Findings: Overall Survey Comments.** In addition to the findings above, the RWPC and the Service Providers were asked to comment on a number of items related to the performance of the Administrative Agency such as ***the effectiveness of the AA's communication process*** and the current relationship between the Service Provider's organizations and the AA. The survey responses were very favorable indicating a very positive and growing relationship between the RWPC, the Service Provider organizations, and the Administrative Agency. Also, it is quite clear from the survey responses that the Administrative Agency has worked very hard in the past year to establish an effective communication process. A renewed sense of collaboration between all parties is evident.

## **Recommendations**

KCA recommends that:

- The Administrative Agency should take advantage of the current momentum and continue to evolve its operations focusing on Provider training, policy enforcement, and operational support/assistance as needed for selected Providers i.e. fiscal compliance, time management, etc.
- The Administrative Agency should continue to provide workshops for the Providers to assist Providers in submitting complete and accurate invoices.
- The RWPC provide a comprehensive orientation regarding the roles and responsibilities of its members.
- The Administrative Agency provide reminders to the Providers that there are two cycles where traditionally longer payment cycles due to matters beyond the AA's control (the July accounting close out from the County each year and the March Grant Year delay in receiving funding).
- The Administrative Agency should continue to work with the Grantor and the Maricopa County Finance Department to streamline the Grant and Fiscal Year-end payment cycle anomalies.
- The Administrative Agency should continue to look for ways to streamline/reduce the amount of information required for the monthly billing process.
- The Administrative Agency should continue to provide workshops for its staff to help them understand some of the management limitations of some of the Service Providers.
- The RWPC continues to use a tool such as Survey Monkey to assess the Administrative Agency.
- The RWPC and the AA should consider using year-over-year data review as a methodology for identifying trends and determining opportunities for continuous improvement.

- The AA should implement an additional data field to track when the provider invoices were ACCURATELY submitted to allow measurement of the actual invoice processing time.

## **Final Comments**

During the 2009 grant year, the AA focused on 1) reviewing policies and procedures within its operation, 2) assisting providers with training and support, and 3) revising specific policies and procedures to enhance efficiency and establish better working relationships with the provider community. During the 2010 grant year, the AA focused on 1) enhancing provider performance standards, 2) continued assisting providers with training and support, and 3) continued revising specific policies and procedures to enhance efficiency, and establish better working relationships with the provider community. This continuous improvement process produced significant results in the 2010 grant year as indicated in the findings above. Also, the policy and procedure reviews coupled with provider training workshops and counseling, resulted in a higher level of AA enforcement of policies and procedures. The bottom line is that the providers have a greater understanding of their operational requirements and the AA has a more efficient means for enforcing policies and procedures.

It appears that the changes made by the Administrative Agency in both 2009 and 2010 have continued to enhanced the efficiency of its overall operation but also established a much more positive working relationship with the RWPC and the Service Providers. Additionally, the Administrative Agent, the Provider Relations Contract Manager, and their staff have continued to evolve a culture of efficiency, effectiveness, customer service, and collaboration now exists which has been recognized and encouraged by the RWPC and the Service Providers.

KCA is proud to have been asked to conduct the 2010 Assessment of the Administrative Agency for the Ryan White Part A Grant Phoenix EMA.

## Appendix 1 – Service Provider Survey Results

#	Question	2010	2009	2010 Comments
1	What is the minimum, average and maximum turnaround for payment of invoices accurately submitted to the Administrative Agency for your organization?	Minimum - <30=5, 30-60=4, >60=1 Average - <30=3, 30-60=5, >60=2 Maximum - <30=1, 30-60=4, >60=3	Minimum - <30=3, 30-60=9, >60=0 Average - <30=0, 30-60=11, >60=1 Maximum - <30=0, 30-60=5, >60=7	- Turnaround has shown improvement.
2	How accurate are the payments of invoices by the Administrative Agency?	Accuracy = 79%	Accuracy = 71%	
3	In the last 12 months, how many invoices have taken greater than 60 days to process?	Total invoices > 60 days = 36	Total invoices > 60 days = 26	
4	Do you feel that the information you have to provide to the Administrative Agency for monthly billing purposes is:	About Right = 47% Too Much = 47%	About Right = 33% Too Much = 67%	- Our contract is a fee for service contract. We not only provide the detail fee for service information, it must be justified through detail general ledger expenditures. The contract gets treated like a "hybrid" fee for service and expense reimbursement contract even though we get paid as a fee for service contractor. - The new forms are very helpful. - the billing has not included all lab bills
5	Changes were implemented in 2010 in the amount/type of documentation required in monthly billings. How would you rate these changes compared to the monthly billing requirements in 2009?	Much Better = 3 Better = 7 About the Same = 3		switching to AHCCCS fee schedule the billing/tracking will be more in-depth than the 2009 billing
6	Do you receive adequate technical assistance from the Administrative Agency for you to provide complete billing packets?	Adequate Technical Assistance = 79%	Adequate Technical Assistance = 81%	AA has always been there to help us. Sometimes I have had to ask more than once, due to my forgetting, and they have always gone the extra mile to provide assistance.
7	Please rate your satisfaction with the availability, communications and technical assistance from the Administrative Agency.	Availability - 79% Communications - 79% Technical Assistance - 82%	Availability - 87% Communications - 77% Technical Assistance - 88%	- The AA's Office is excellent to work with from a provider perspective. - The tech help line is wonderful. Communications with AA is open and clear. Rose Connor stays on top of all happenings in the department.
8	How would you describe the relationship between your organization and the Administrative Agency?	Relationship - 84%	Relationship - 81%	They extend every courtesy to me and questions I have. Rose Connor, Jen Hawkins, Vicki Jaquez and Carmen are especially gracious and knowledgeable.

#	Question	2010	2009	2010 Comments
9	How would you describe the Ryan White Part A contracting process?	Ease of understanding RFP - 67% Time allotted for response - 67% Negotiation process/final contracting - 65% Awareness of reporting requirements, etc. - 73%	Ease of understanding RFP - 62% Time allotted for response - 67% Negotiation process/final contracting - 73% Awareness of reporting requirements, etc. - 71%	- Any lack of awareness on my part is filled in by them.
10	Do you need additional technical assistance or information from the Administrative Agency regarding any issues related to this survey?		Request Technical Assistance - 0%	
11	If you answered "yes" to the previous question and you would like us to provide your contact information to the Administrative Agency, please provide the following information".		No one requested technical assistance.	



## Appendix 2 – Planning Council Survey Results

#	Question	2010	2009	2010 Comments
1	Please indicate your membership status on the Planning Council (please select all that apply).	General Public - 38% Institutional Member - 24% Service Provider Rep - 34% Not Sure - 3%	General Public - 40% Institutional Member - 24% Service Provider Rep - 32% Not Sure - 4%	
2	Are the directives issued by the Ryan White Planning Council implemented by the Administrative Agency in a timely and accurate manner?	Timely - 91% Accurate - 93%	Timely - 84% Accurate - 84%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The RWPC in Phoenix, AZ is both efficient and thorough.</li> <li>- The only delay has been finding appropriate and willing participants for some of the directives that were targeted to a specific geographic area.</li> <li>- So far I had good experiences in all the meetings.</li> <li>- Outstanding Work, Always.</li> <li>- And just to add. Always professional</li> <li>- Timeliness is sometimes beyond their control</li> <li>- The AA's office always tries to be timely, if they aren't then we are always made known if additional time is needed to complete the task at hand .</li> </ul>
3	Does the Administrative Agency provide sufficient information to the Planning Council to allow them to monitor the implementation of the Planning Council directives?	Provide sufficient information - 93%	Provide sufficient information - 82%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I think it has being sufficient information.</li> <li>- I've never known there to be a problem.</li> </ul>
4	Do you feel that the Administrative Agency accurately contracts the funding allocated by the Planning Council?	Accurately contracts funds - 88%	Accurately contracts funds - 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VERY WELL!</li> <li>- we don't have access to the contracting part.</li> <li>- There has been a huge error in the Contracting for new Ryan White Clinics. The Experienced HIV Providers in Phoenix were not aware of a potential contract to become a RW Clinic. As a result 2 RW clinics were formed that have NO IDEA what they are doing. In one case a very risky place has a contract!</li> <li>- only noted exception being caused by lack of viable contractors</li> <li>- They do a great job !</li> </ul>
5	Does the Administrative Agency provide adequate information and notification to allow reallocation of funds to other categories if necessary to ensure that grant funds are managed according to Planning Council directives?	Provides adequate notification? - 92% Provides adequate information? - 92%	Provides adequate notification? - 80% Provides adequate information? - 86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Again the council has not been briefed on the current crisis</li> <li>- The AA's office always makes it known to the Executive Committee who in turn notifies the full council when this happens</li> </ul>

#	Question	2010	2009	2010 Comments
6	As a Planning Council member, please rate the communication between the Planning Council and Administrative Agency.	Communications - 91%	Communications - 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I always thought it was perfect until this upsetting finding.</li> <li>- Overall, I think that the communication is great &amp; if something is not understood, the AA's office makes sure that no barriers exist and all is well.</li> </ul>
7	Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of the Administrative Agency and Planning Council?	Administrative Agency - 91% Planning Council - 96%	Administrative Agency - 87% Planning Council - 95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I'm A newer member. I'm still learning. Everyone has been most helpful.</li> <li>- As my general knowledge how the planning council grows, so does my understanding in how the two are related, interact &amp; the purpose for such.</li> </ul>
8	Please share any additional comments or information about the relationship between the Planning Council and the Administrative Agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best it has ever been.</li> <li>- Impressed with the partnership between the PC and AA -- very responsive</li> <li>- After being a member for the past 5 years I can truthfully say that the relationship between the AA and the PC is one of honesty and a compassionate understanding of the tasks that lie before us in continuing to provide adequate services for the PLWA'S living in this EMA.</li> <li>- I have worked with the RWPC in Phx EMA for fifteen years, initially as a recipient of services and, after said services improved my health (saved my life actually) as a volunteer for or employee of four providers. The current AA team is the best in my experience.</li> <li>- our relationship has improved greatly over the years and now the pc is provided with a fantastic detailed range of data for us to make decisions with.</li> <li>-</li> <li>- motto= 'don't make waves'</li> <li>-</li> <li>- Very collaborative</li> <li>- Nothing other than to say thanks for the support!</li> </ul>		