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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Nicholas A. Toumpas
Commissioner

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Sheri L. Rockburn
Chief Financial Officer

September 12, 2014

Her Excellency, Governor Margaret Wood Hassan
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, NH 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

100% General Funds

Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Commissioner, to make an unencumbered payment for annual membership dues to the New England States Consortium Systems Organization, 222 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA, 01545-2732, Vendor # 162545, B001, in the amount of \$28,500 for the period January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015, effective upon Governor and Council approval. Funds are available in the following account:

05-95-95-950010-5000- HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, HHS:COMMISSIONER, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

SFY	Appropriation	Class/Object	Class Title	Job Number	Amount
2015	010-095-50000000	026-500251	Organizational Dues	95062017	\$28,500.00

EXPLANATION

The New England States Consortium Systems Organization (NESCO) is a non-profit corporation organized by the six New England Health and Human services agencies and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The mission of the organization is to foster communication and collaboration among members through information sharing and joint projects. Its goal is to support the health and human services policy and system needs of the New England states by providing a framework for knowledge exchange in order to maximize policy, program and cost effectiveness.

Listed below are answers to standard questions required by Governor and Council organization dues and membership approval submissions:

- 1) How long has this organization been in existence and how long has this agency been a member of this organization?
 - a. NESCSO was established in 2000 as a not-for profit with a Board comprised of the six New England Health and Human Services agency Commissioners or their delegates and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The state of NH Department of Health and Human has been a member of NESCSO since its inception.

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- 2) Is there any other organization which provides the same or similar benefits which your agency belongs to?
 - a. NESCSO is unique. It was created to help reduce the level of duplication of effort and to leverage purchasing power among the six New England states' Medicaid programs. Comparative groups from other states do not currently exist.
- 3) How many other state's belonging to this organization and is your agency the sole New Hampshire state agency that is a member?
 - a. NESCSO was established by the New England States Consortium, which consists of the six New England States. NESCSO's purpose is to identify and address issues associated with the ongoing support and administration of the Medicaid programs within the New England region. The State of New Hampshire Medicaid program is administered by the NH Department of Health and Human Services; therefore the Department is the only New Hampshire State Agency that is a member.
- 4) How is the dues structure established? (Standard fee for all states, based on population, based on other criteria, etc)
 - a. A standard fee for all states is agreed upon by each of the six New England states. Each of the states has committed \$28,500 for the period of January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015 to support NESCSO.
- 5) What benefit does the state receive from participating in this membership?
 - a. Membership in NESCSO allows states to leverage Medicaid dollars by avoiding duplication of efforts by each of the states. Since new federal Medicaid requirements as well as ongoing program operational issues are often the same for every state, leveraging can offer savings of both staff time and state expenditures. NESCSO's purpose is to identify and address issues associated with the ongoing support and administration of the Medicaid programs within the New England region. Most of NESCSO's activities focus on shared projects, but NESCSO is also available as a resource that individual states may use to develop individual projects. Projects of the state-specific kind are funded through direct payment by the state.
 - b. NESCSO fulfills three distinct needs of states: 1) a clearinghouse/library function that amasses information specifically relevant to the Health and Human Service agencies of the New England States, such as copies of recent Advance Planning Documents and Requests for Proposals approved by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; 2) a staff collaboration function that allows for sharing of Medicaid strategies for different program areas and joint development of the technical support functions of new mandates, all of which would otherwise have to be done separately in each of the six states; and 3) capacity for joint projects among the states utilizing NESCSO's facilities and server for joint database creation and project management at NESCSO's web site.
 - i. NESCSO accomplishments to date include:

1. The development of the New England States Collaborative Insurance Exchange Systems; a resource guide for members to be able to contact their colleagues in the other states to discuss questions or issues that may arise regarding Health Insurance Exchange.
 2. The development of a comprehensive website which supports a clearinghouse/library; development of a web-based project tracking tool available to all New England health and human services employees.
 3. Participation in the New England Partnership (a required state-to-state technical assistance project for all federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services grantees for Medicaid Infrastructure grants under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999)
 4. Shared health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) translator development.
 5. Several regional studies including demographics affecting Medicaid populations in New England, disease management measurement and a survey on the needs of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) population.
 6. Semi-annual New England Commissioner collaborative forums.
 7. Workgroups focused on the improvement of children's health, Medicaid eligibility issues, durable medical equipment and several other federal and state workshops.
- ii. One of the most significant projects led by NESCSO was the coordination of assessment and implementation efforts of the six New England states for the federally mandated Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. This Act, which standardized data transmissions of healthcare information nationally, was very technical and complex. The six New England states built a team that worked together on the project across the six states.
 - iii. NESCSO also sponsored the national annual Medicaid Enterprise Systems Conference, formerly known as the Medicaid Management Information System Conference, in August 2014 in Denver, Colorado, which drew over 1,300 attendees from across the country. In prior years the conference has been held in Nashua, New Hampshire and Providence, Rhode Island. The 2015 conference will be held in Des Moines, Iowa. Based on these successes, NESCSO now serves as the fiscal intermediary for the National Association of State Medicaid Director's subsidiary that sponsors the annual national Medicaid Enterprise Systems conference.
- 6) Are training or educational/ research materials included in the membership? If so, is the cost included? Explain in detail.
- a. Training and educational/research materials are included in the cost of membership. Examples include
 - i. Timely news and current awareness services via the New England News section of the NESCSO website and periodic updates via e-newsletters
 - ii. Access to the NESCSO web-based library and archive service on topics relevant to Medicaid and Health and Human Services

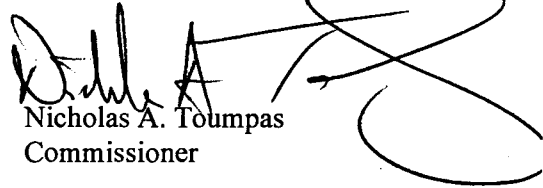
- iii. The NESCSO website, www.nescso.org, offers features such as daily Medicaid and health news updates, links to national and regional sites and individualized favorites. NESCSO's comprehensive library brings together relevant literature and reports from key public and private resources as well as summarized research projects completed for NESCSO members.
 - iv. Members also have the ability to request specific information on any healthcare topic directly from the NESCSO website. Additionally, the website is linked to ONTRAK, a personal planner and project tracking system. ONTRAK is a free and secure online web based project management program that allows communication between project specific members via various tools such as a threaded discussion and document sharing.
- 7) Is the membership required to receive any federal grants or required in order to receive or participate in licensing or certification exams? Explain.
- a. Membership in NESCSO is not required, however, NESCSO is a valuable resource to the Department when addressing issues associated with the administration of the Medicaid program.
- 8) Is there any travel included with this membership fee? Explain in detail any travel to include the number of employees involved, the number of trips, destination if known and purposes of membership supported trips.
- a. Yes, there is travel included in the membership fee. Specifically, the Board of Directors meets quarterly with twice a year in person meetings. The location of the meetings is rotated among the Six New England states. Commissioner Toumpas attends both meetings. Members of the Department Policy Team attend only when the agenda is pertinent to their scope of responsibilities and at the request of the Commissioner. NESCSO reimburses all travel expenses at 100%.
- 9) Which state agency employees are directly involved with this organization? (Indicate if they are members, voting members, committee members, and/or officers of the organization.
- a. Nicholas A. Toumpas, Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner – Voting Board Member
 - b. Any State of NH Department of Health and Human Services employee may access the tools of NESCSO through the NESCSO secure web portal.
- 10) Explain in detail any negative impact to the State if the Agency did not belong to this organization.
- a. NESCSO was designed to leverage the Medicaid dollars of the six New England states by avoiding duplication of efforts required by each of the programs and historically performed in isolation. Since new federal Medicaid requirements and ongoing program operational issues are often the same for every state, leveraging the resources of the six states can offer savings of both staff time and state expenditures. If New Hampshire did not belong to NESCSO we would still be faced with the same challenges that come with administering the Medicaid program, however, we would need to address them as an individual state rather than in the collaborative manner that NESCSO allows us.

Area Served: Statewide.

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Source of Funds: 100% General Funds. The New Hampshire support will generate an identical amount of federal Medicaid funds for NESCSO.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nicholas A. Toumpas
Commissioner

