MIG Discussion Board
A New Feature at www.nchsd.org

The MIG Discussion Board allows Medicaid Infrastructure Grantees to engage in online discussions about topics that are interesting and important to them. We hope the Discussion Board becomes a place for engaging and dynamic conversations. But we know it will take some practice before that happens. These instructions will help you register and begin reviewing and posting comments and messages.

For further assistance, contact Sara Salley (ssalley@hdadvocates.org) or Laura Wilhelm (lwilhelm@hdadvocates.org).

Getting Started – Registration and Account Settings

You can find the Discussion Board at http://forums.nchsd.org. It is also available using the Discussion links on the www.nchsd.org website. These links take you to the main Discussion page, called the Board Index.

MIG staff and their invited partners in NCHSD member states will have full use of the Board—you can post new topics or comments, reply to other posts, and send email and private messages to other users. Other visitors to the Board can view what is posted, but cannot post their own comments or use the other Board features unless they register. Registrations will be approved by the Board administrators at NCHSD.

Registering. To begin using the Board you'll need to register. You can use this link, or go to the Board Index and click on **Register** (upper right portion of the page). Then follow these steps:

1. Review and agree to the terms of registration (such as agreeing not to post obscene material, etc.).

2. Enter a username. We ask that you *use your full name (first and last name, with a space in between) as your username*. This will be displayed on the site when you are signed in and when you post any questions or replies. Using your full name will allow Board users to easily identify who they are talking to; it will also enable the Board administrator to more quickly activate your registration. Your username is the name you will use when you come back to the site and log in.

3. Enter your email address and password (twice), choose your time zone, and then enter the letters and/or numbers of the confirmation code. Then click **Submit**. Please note–the email address you enter here will *never* appear on the Discussion Board. It will be used only by the Board Administrator to send you messages about your registration or use of the board. Other Board members or users will not see your email address.

The confirmation page will let you know that a Discussion Board administrator will have to approve your registration, and you will get a confirmation email to that effect. Someone here at NCHSD will then activate

your account registration and send you an email to let you know when that is done. You'll then be free to return to the Discussion Board, logon, and begin using the Board's many features.[1]

Your profile and user account settings. Once you are registered and your account is activated by an NCHSD administrator, you should set up your account to work the way you want it. First log in: On the main Discussion Board page, in the Login – Register section, enter your username and password and click the **Login** button. You'll be automatically returned to the main page in a few seconds (or click on **Return to Board index**).

From there you can click on **User Control Panel** which is near the top of the page, just below our logo and the Board Index link. Begin with the tab **Board Preferences**. Some important settings include:

> ***Users can contact me by email:*** If this is enabled ("Yes") other registered users can click on your username and send an email to the address you entered when you registered. Although they won't see your email address, the message will go directly to your address. Although the message will have a "from" address that belongs to the Board administrator, if you reply to the message it will go to the sender's email address. *At this point, your email address will be visible to the sender*. In any case, only registered users of the Discussion Board can ever use the email feature; unregistered visitors cannot view your profile, send you email or other messages.

> ***Allow users to send you private messages:*** If this is enabled ("Yes") the Discussion Board will serve something like an independent email account. You can send and receive email messages from other registered users using the Private Messages tab in the User Control Panel. Unlike the email feature, a private message does not go directly to the recipient—instead, the Board sends a notification email to let the recipient know they have a private message in their Discussion Board "inbox." To view the message, the recipient will have to log on and go to the Private Message tab on their own User Control Panel (a handy link is provided in the notification email). Instructions on how to send messages are provided below.

> ***Notify me on new private message*** and ***Pop up window on new private message:*** These settings allow you to choose whether and how you want to be notified if someone sends you a private message. If you select "Yes" to the "notify me" option, you will get an email message from the Board administrator telling you there is a new message in your Private Message inbox; if you say "yes" to the "pop up window" option, if you are logged onto the Discussion Board when a message arrives, a pop up window will alert you. If you select "No" for both these options, you will have to log onto the Discussion Board to check your Private Message inbox and find out if there are any new messages for you.

> ***Hide my online status:*** By default, the Discussion Board shows how many registered users and guests are on the site, and allows registered users to see the usernames of other registered users on the site at the same time they are. If you want to log on and use the Board without being visible to other registered users, select "Yes" for this option.

Other settings you might want to adjust are under the **Profile** tab. On the Overview tab, you can change your email address or password by clicking **Edit account settings** in the left column. You can also add individual information such as your location (e.g., your state), occupation and website address on the "Edit profile" page. If you like, you can click on **Edit signature** and add a signature block that will appear at the bottom of everything you post. Please note–we do not recommend providing any personal details—such as your phone number or email address—in your profile or signature block. Your profile (but not your account settings) can be viewed by other Discussion Board users.

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[1] We are using this kind of account activation process to make sure the Discussion Board is not used by spammers or vendors, or anyone else who would use the Board inappropriately. We want to keep this Board focused on the issues YOU want to talk about with your fellow MIGs!

Using the Board – the Basics

Viewing. When you visit the Discussion Board as a registered member, you'll see the main Discussion Forums – these are general areas for discussion, such as NCHSD's Question of the Month, Bugs or Errors (if you're having trouble with the site), and State-to-State Sharing. If you click on a Forum, you'll see the different topics or questions that are posted in the forum. You can click on a topic and view the questions and replies that are posted.

In general, anyone who visits the Discussion Board can view the messages that are posted there. However, only registered users can add their comments to the discussion by posting.

Posting. If you want to post a message on the Board, you will need to enter your username and password in the Login – Register section of the main Board index page (near the middle of the page), and click the **Login** button. Click on the forum that interests you.[2] If there is a topic you want to discuss, click on its title. You will then see the posts and replies other users have made on this topic. You can click on a post, and reply to it by clicking the **PostReply** button. If you want to create a new topic for discussion, you can use the **NewTopic** button.

When you post a reply, simply enter your comments in the large text field and click **Submit**. You can also save your comments to finish and post later, or preview your comments before posting. If you want to include an attachment, use the **Upload Attachment** tab below the text box. There are icons you can use to make your posting stand out, and smilies to add animation to your text. You can even post in a different color font, so have some fun!

Rest assured—you can edit or delete anything that you post. (Just click on the topic or reply that you posted, and use the **Edit** or **X** buttons.) However, be aware that the content of your post may be preserved by other people who have viewed it, so take care not to post something you might regret later. The Discussion Board administrators can also delete postings that are considered inappropriate under the Board's Terms of Agreement.

Subscribing. The Discussion Board allows you to sign up to receive email notices whenever something new is posted to a forum or topic you are interested in. When you subscribe to a forum or topic, the Board will automatically send you an email notifying you that a new topic or post has been posted. To sign up for these email notices, go to the forum or topic page you are interested in and click **Subscribe** (near the bottom of the page). You can unsubscribe just as easily—go to the forum or topic page you are subscribed to and click **Unsubscribe**.

You can also unsubscribe to forums or topics through the User Control Panel. From the Overview page, click on **Manage subscriptions**. You are subscribed to the forums and topics that are shown as "Watched"; unsubscribe by checking the box next to those you are no longer interested in and click **Unwatch marked**. To unsubscribe to all of them at once, click **Unwatch All**.

Sending messages. You can use the Discussion Board to contact other users through email, without posting a reply to the forum or topic. There are two ways to do this, depending on what the Board user you want to contact has allowed (see ***Your user account and profile*** above).

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[2] You should see, near the bottom of the page, your Forum Permissions indicating that you are allowed to post on this forum – if nothing appears, check to see if you are logged in – use the Login button near the top of the page. If you are logged in but no Forum Permissions appear, contact Sara Salley at ssalley@hdadvocates.org.

Email: If a registered user allows other registered users to contact them by email, you can do so through the Discussion Board. To send an email to another registered user, log in to the Board and find their username. You can do this by finding a message they posted and clicking on the username displayed with the posting. Or, click on the **Members** link near the top of the page—a list of all registered users will be displayed and you can click on the person's name. You will then see their profile, including a link to **Email so-and-so**. Click that link, fill out the subject and message sections, and click **Submit** to send your email. As explained above, email message sent through the Board arrive in the recipient's own email inbox, but the "from" address is the Board administrator's email address. However, when a recipient replies to the email, the message will go to the original sender.

Private Message: To get there, log in and click on the User Control Panel link, and then on the Private Messages tab. Or, click on the "(# new messages)" link that is on the same line as the User Control Panel link. Use the **NewPM** or **Compose Message** links to write a message. Instead of an email address, you would enter a username in the text field at the top of the message, and then click **Add**. You can also use **Find a Member** to browse through a list of members, select one, click on **Select marked**, and then, back at the message screen, click **Add** to put the user in the address field.   Write a subject line and your message text, and click **Submit**. Unlike the email feature, a private message does not go directly to the recipient—instead, the Board sends a notification email to let the recipient know they have a private message in their Discussion Board "inbox." To view the message, the recipient will have to log on and go to the Private Message tab on their own User Control Panel (a handy link is provided in the notification email).

Inviting Other Participants

The MIG Discussion Board is currently open to MIG staff in NCHSD states. If there are MIG partners and stakeholders in your state who you want to participate in the discussions there, please just email Sara Salley—we will make sure they are invited to join and their registration is activated.

Further Assistance

If you need more assistance or would like a tutorial, please contact Sara Salley (ssalley@hdadvocates.org) or Laura Wilhelm (lwilhelm@hdadvocates.org).