



Please Join the Council in Supporting Changes to Medicaid and Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers To Save the State Money

GOAL

The Council has recommended a number of ideas that could save the state money if implemented and provide greater services to Alaskans with disabilities and their families.

MEDICAID EXPANSION

As the state considers its options for Medicaid expansion and its impact on a number of Alaskans, we look forward to being part of the discussion. We are in the process of preparing the Council's formal position on Medicaid expansion. In the meantime, we also have some ideas to share that can be part of the conversation around reforms as well.

WHAT ARE THE REFORMS?

- **Re-use and Recycling of Durable Medical Equipment**
 - The Council encourages the state to adopt changes in regulations which will allow for the re-use and recycling of durable medical equipment and assistive technology purchased via Medicaid. The specific regulations which need to be altered are as follows:
 - 7 ACC 120.200-299
 - 7 ACC 145.420
 - 7 ACC 160.900
 - Currently, the state of Alaska prohibits the purchase of used equipment with Medicaid dollars, even though CMS allows for reuse and recycling of equipment.
 - In other states, re-use systems have been put in place so that when equipment is no longer needed it goes back to a state-sponsored program for re-use, cleaning, repair, and purchase at a much-reduced cost. These programs could be copied and put in place in Alaska.

- **Medicaid 1915(k) and (i) State Plans**

- By adopting the 1915(k) amendment to the state plan in addition to the current Alaska PCA services plan, the state will receive an additional 6% federal match (\$13 million annually) and could save the state \$15 million¹ in general funds.
- Through the 1915(i) state plan option, the state could also offer some HCB services for individuals who do not yet require institutional level of care.
- Having combined 1915(i) and 1915 (k) state plans would allow Alaska to tailor services more specifically to the needs of our population and thus better serve all Alaskans with disabilities.

- **Greater use of Telepractice**

- The Council recommends changes to the state regulation 7 ACC 110.635, which currently prohibits the use of telepractice for HCBS waiver services.
- Due to the remote nature of much of our state and high health care costs, telepractice would benefit all Alaskans as well as reduce state Medicaid costs significantly.
- Since CMS does not prohibit telepractice of HCB services and professional licensing organizations encourage telepractice, we strongly urge the state to amend Medicaid regulations to allow HCBS waiver services to be practiced remotely, when appropriate and possible.

- **Employing People with Disabilities**

- We support the implementation of the Employment First Act (CSHB 211)² to ensure that the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publically-funded services to Alaskans with disabilities is competitive, integrated employment.
- Employment for individuals with disabilities not only increases the amount of contributing tax-payers, but also improves the health, self-sufficiency, and quality of life for the individual.
- Employing people with disabilities presents an opportunity to lower Medicaid costs and potentially replace state-funded services that would otherwise be needed.

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¹ According to the Medicaid innovations document provided on the MRAG website at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/Commissioner/Pages/mrag/Sept-17-meeting.aspx>

²Employment First Act, <http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/28/Bills/HB0211Z.PDF>
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