

Alaska Dispatch News

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Dermot Cole ^[1]

January 27, 2014

Main Image:

Hospital bed 2 ^[2]

Main Image Caption:

More than 6,500 people in Alaska on Medicaid, including about 1,000 in Anchorage's Mountain View neighborhood, are running up needless medical bills with repeat visits to hospital emergency rooms for minor problems.

From the office of Rep. Tarr

FAIRBANKS -- The government has a term to describe about 6,500 Medicaid patients in Alaska who make a habit of going to hospital emergency rooms with minor problems -- "super utilizers."

Margaret Brodie, state Medicaid director, told an Alaska House hearing Monday that those patients are a super problem for the program, which provides \$1 billion in state and federal funds for medical care to low-income Alaskans. A state review found that one patient used the emergency room 79 times between Jan. 1, 2012 and Sept. 17, 2013, though the average was 12 visits per person.

She said the state has found that one Anchorage neighborhood is a hotspot for many of the more than 3,000 super utilizers in the state's largest city. More than a third of the city's total, 1,069 super utilizers, were in Mountain View, the northeast neighborhood. But why?

"There's not a health clinic there," Brodie said. "The closest thing to them is Alaska Regional Hospital, and it happens to be right on the bus route. So that's where they get their primary care."

About 1,800 of the Medicaid patients in Alaska who make regular repeat visits are children 12 and under who are brought to emergency rooms by parents or guardians.

Alaska is one of five states working with the National Governors Association to come up with ways to prevent the excessive use of emergency room services. The state Division of Health Care Services (DHCS) said it "has identified a group of super utilizer patients who will have their care guided throughout a 12-consecutive-month process. By following these patients, DHCS will develop an informed sense of the challenges of providing appropriate, medically necessary health care to super utilizer patients."

"We're looking at ways that we can stop them from using the emergency room inappropriately," Brodie told the health and social services finance subcommittee. "They'll get the care that they need, but not through an emergency room setting. We'd rather pay an office visit than an emergency room visit."

The state is working with the hospital and others to see what can be done to "get some sort of health care" in Mountain View.

Rep. Les Gara, an Anchorage Democrat, said the problem could be directly addressed at the emergency room by referring patients directly to clinics for minor problems.

"There should be something at the emergency room that Medicaid works with the hospitals on that says, 'Here's a cab voucher. We've called. There's availability there. They can deal with your minor conditions. If you decide not to do that, we will garnish your Permanent Fund Dividend. It's harsh, but it's cheaper,'" he said, asking for state officials to tell him why that wouldn't be the right approach.

He said that the reason people go to the emergency room is that they know Medicaid covers the cost.

A national study said that 5 percent of Medicaid beneficiaries are responsible for 54 percent of the program's cost.

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From the office of Rep. Tan

Alaska Medicaid Looking to Rein in ER "Super Utilizers"

By Amy Snow Landa , January 28, 2014

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Alaska is taking a closer look at its Medicaid beneficiaries who regularly visit hospital emergency departments seeking primary care services.

The state's Medicaid director, Margaret Brodie, told legislators at a House hearing on Jan. 27 that reining in these ER "super utilizers" is a primary cost-control strategy that the Department of Health and Social Services is pursuing.



"Super utilizers" are defined as people who use hospital ERs for non-emergent care at least four times per year.

A recent study found that about 25 percent of ER utilization by Medicaid beneficiaries is in one "hotspot"—the neighborhood of Mountain View in Anchorage, Brodie told the health and social services finance subcommittee. Mountain View is in northeast Anchorage and borders a military base.

There is no health clinic in that area, Brodie noted. "The closest provider is Alaska Regional Hospital, and it happens to be right on the bus route. So that is where they get their primary care."

Brodie said the Department is looking for ways to redirect super utilizers to appropriate settings for primary care. The plan includes working with Alaska Regional Hospital and the state's public health system to see if there is a way to provide "some sort of health care in that area," she said.

The Department is under pressure to contain growth in Medicaid expenditures, with Gov. Sean Parnell calling for the state to restrain spending across the board in FY 2015.

Total Medicaid expenditures are about \$1.65 billion in FY 2014.

The Governor's budget proposal calls for an increase of about \$8.2 million in FY 2015, Brodie said.

The increase was initially going to be about \$16 million, noted the subcommittee's chairman, Rep. Mark Neumann, R-Wasilla.

He asked Brodie how that increase was reduced. She responded that each of the divisions had made cuts, largely by eliminating certain staff positions.



The Department will still be providing the same level services we do now,"
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Brodie said.

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Legislators urged her and Craig Christenson, deputy commissioner for
Medicaid and health care policy, to continue to find efficiencies in the budget
to reduce cost growth.

Brodie's presentation slides noted (on slide 11) that the average cost per
Medicaid recipient in Alaska has been declining over the past few years, from
more than \$5,400 in FY 2011 to less than \$5,100 in FY 2013.

The average cost per Medicaid recipient under age 17 using psychotropic
medication has also dropped during the same period, from nearly \$1,600 to
less than \$1,300 per year. (slide 8).

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From the office of Rep. Tan

Amended Request for Proposals: Alaska Medicaid Coordinated Care Initiative (AMCCI - ER Superutilizers)

****Amendment #1 issued 10/22/14 serves to change the deadline for receipt of proposals to October 31, 2014 @ 1:00 pm, Alaska Prevailing Time. All other sections of the RFP remain the same. Refer to the attached amendment.****

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Health Care Services (DHCS), is soliciting proposals to award one or more contracts at DHSS sole discretion, if budget permits, to provide case management and utilization review (CM/UR) services in support of Alaska Medicaid Coordinated Care Initiative (AMCCI).

DHCS has identified high utilizers of emergency room services (superutilizers) whose care would be the initial focus of this contract and the AMCCI (see section 4.02.3). However, at the sole discretion of DHCS, AMCCI participants may include any or all AK Medicaid member.

Initially, the AMCCI aims to reduce the number of emergency room (ER) visits, specifically those that are not emergent. Other goals include increased use of preventive care, comprehensive care coordination, and enhanced integration of primary medical care and behavioral health services. The intended outcome of the AMCCI is to improve access to services and healthcare outcomes, as well as promoting more efficient use of services thereby reducing unnecessary and wasteful health care expenditures.

Issue Date: October 10, 2014

Deadline for receipt of proposals: October 31, 2014 @ 4:00 pm, Alaska Prevailing Time. Faxed or oral proposals are not acceptable. An offeror's failure to submit a proposal prior to the deadline will cause the proposal to be disqualified. Late proposals or amendments will not be opened or accepted for evaluation.

Important Notice: If you received this solicitation from the State of Alaska's "Online Public Notice" web site, you must register with the Procurement Officer listed in this document to receive subsequent amendments. Failure to contact the procurement officer may result in the rejection of your offer.

Procurement Officer: Lois Lemus
907-269-3002p, 907-269-7829f, 907-465-3196tdd
Email: lois.lemus@alaska.gov

Attachments:
RFP 2015-0600-2824

Attachments Separate from RFP:

1. Standard Agreement Form - EXAMPLE
2. Notice of Intent to Award - EXAMPLE
3. Vendor Report Template
4. Medication Screening
5. Satisfaction Survey

Attachments, History, Details

Attachments

2015-0600-2824 - RFP Amendment #1.pdf
EXAMPLE -Notice of Intent to Award.pdf
EXAMPLE -Standard Agreement.pdf
FROM Vendor Report Template 2014-10-09.pdf
Init Hlth Screen (AMCCI) 2014-10-09.pdf
Monthly Medication Compliance Form.pdf
Patient Satisfaction Survey 2014-10-09.pdf

Details

Department:	Health and Social Services
Category:	Procurement
Sub-Category:	
Location(s):	Statewide
Project/Regulation #:	
Publish Date:	10/22/2014
Archive Date:	11/3/2014