

## **CMS Issues Flurry of Medicaid Waiver Approvals and Guidance**

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Over the past several weeks, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a number of 1115 waiver approvals. The approvals largely focus on issues that were central to the Biden Administration's priorities, including health-related social needs (HRSN) services, also referred to as social determinants of health interventions; pre- and post-release services for individuals in correctional facilities; and substance abuse/mental health treatment. On a related basis, CMS has also released several forms of guidance, including Medicaid Director Letters and Informational Bulletins, to provide further guidance on items such as eligibility determinations and renewals, expansion and clarification of HRSN services, and coverage of services for incarcerated youth.

Through these actions, the administration seeks to shore up some of their central policy goals, including expanding access to coverage and addressing the social determinants of health for Medicaid beneficiaries. While President Trump could seek to undo some of these policy actions, rescinding waiver approvals can be challenging and undoing previously issued guidance will require future policymaking activity. As the administration transition occurs, we anticipate administrative activities that focus more intently on ensuring enrolled individuals are eligible for services, implementing additional eligibility criteria such as work requirements, and more aggressive fraud oversight.

Some of the waiver approvals have included:

- California: BH-CONNECT, including initiatives to strengthen the behavioral health workforce, incentivize improvements in the behavioral health delivery system, promoting HRSN, supporting the health of children and youth involved in the child welfare system, and providing transitional care management for children returning to the community. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demonstrations/downloads/ca-bh-connect-ca-12162024.pdf>
- California: CalAIM, including incarceration reentry demonstration initiative, provide CHIP expenditure authority for HRSN, and update conditions for already approved HRSN services: <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demo/demonstration-and-waiver-list/81046>
- Kentucky: TEAMKY, including substance use disorder treatment for individuals residing in an institution for mental diseases, authority for the incarceration reentry demonstration initiative, medically necessary short-term inpatient treatment in IMDs, episodic housing interventions under HRSN, Recovery Residence Support

Services: <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demonstrations/downloads/ky-teamky-dmnstn-appvl-12122024.pdf>

- West Virginia: Behavioral Health Continuum of Care, including SUD treatment for individuals in an IMD, peer recovery support specialist services, certain HRSN housing supports, and the reentry demonstration initiative. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demo/demonstration-and-waiver-list/83561>
- North Carolina: Medicaid Reform, including mandatory managed care, SUD treatment in IMDs, changes to the HRSN services, enhanced home and community-based benefit, health information technology incentive-based programs, workforce initiatives, designated state health programs, and the reentry demonstration initiative. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demonstrations/downloads/nc-medicaid-reform-demo-extn-aprvl-12102024.pdf>

Guidance has included:

- Requirements for providing, pre-populating, and accepting renewal forms: <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib-12202024.pdf>
- Updated guidance on HRSN: <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib12102024.pdf>
- Protecting Beneficiaries against Fraud and Abuse Sanctions: <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/smd24005.pdf>
- Requirements for Conducting Ex Parte Renewals: <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib11262024.pdf>
- Financial Eligibility Verification Requirements and Flexibilities: <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib11202024.pdf>