

Allies for Independence Washington Insights

Week of April 10, 2023

CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

Congress returns next week for an extended work period. This upcoming work period will be critical to several issues before Congress and the Administration, in particular the looming debt limit crisis. Both chambers will begin preparing their respective FY24 budgets, but House Republicans have tied the budget to the debt limit fight to secure budgetary concessions from the Biden Administration. So far, the effort has gone nowhere leading to the current stalemate.

That said, Republican leadership is preparing to release a debt limit package later this month. Early reporting suggests legislation would lift the debt limit until May 2024, with a cap on non-defense discretionary spending or a cap on overall discretionary spending after reducing to FY2022 levels. The House GOP's plan is unlikely to be considered in the Senate if it passes the House, but is a necessary step as they seek to negotiate with the White House.

Another issue for the upcoming work period is the contradictory court decisions around access to mifepristone. Last Friday, federal judges in Texas and Washington issued two conflicting rulings on the abortion pill. Then on Wednesday, a federal appeals court agreed to maintain the availability of the abortion pill, but only under strict conditions that prohibit use beyond seven weeks of pregnancy and bar its distribution by mail. The Biden Administration is expected to ask the Supreme Court to intervene immediately.

We are also less than a month away from the end of the public health emergency (PHE), which will be disruptive for the Medicaid community as states operate on different timelines to return to pre-COVID status.

Please reach out if you have any questions or would like additional information.

UPDATES: BEYOND CAPITOL HILL

Post-COVID: Medicaid Redeterminations Underway

Starting this month, five states ended their Medicaid continuous coverage policies authorized under the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE). The unwinding process is just getting underway and will lead to current Medicaid enrollees losing coverage, which is leading to concerns from providers and other stakeholders on ensuring a transition with minimal disruption. The states that initiated this process this month are Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, New Hampshire, and South Dakota. In May, 15 states are expected to follow suit for initiating unwinding-related redeterminations. We will continue to closely follow this issue over the coming months.

HHS Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Leans in on Redetermination Process

Last week, HHS OCR issued a letter reminding states of their civil rights obligations under federal law to ensure that individuals continue to have access to Medicaid and CHIP coverage as the federal government transitions away from continuous enrollment policies. Specifically, “states are required to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful language access for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) and ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities. HHS anticipates 15 million individuals will lose coverage due to these policy changes, based on historical patterns of coverage loss. If you would like to read the letter, please [click here](#).

Biden-Harris Administration Update on Long COVID Federal Response

The Administration released a fact sheet last week providing updates on the progress made in responding to Long COVID. The effort is intended to strengthen the quality of care across health programs, as well as highlight resources and services to support individuals dealing with Long COVID. This is a relevant issue for the long-term services and support conversation, as the long-term consequences of COVID diagnosis are not fully understood. You can read the fact sheet by [clicking here](#).

Medicaid Work Requirements Update

Earlier this month, the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) released a report on where things stand federally and at the state level on Medicaid work requirements. Medicaid work requirements were a major feature of the previous Administration’s health care priorities, as they permitted states to utilize Section 1115 waivers to condition Medicaid coverage on meeting certain work requirements. These policies led to thousands of people losing coverage in states that implemented these policies, and they were largely abandoned when President Biden took office.

You can read more about KFF’s work by [clicking here](#). There continues to be growing stress among stakeholders about a potential return of Medicaid work requirements as GOP lawmakers look to control costs at the federal level. We are closely following this issue and encourage you to reach out with questions.

ISSUE OF THE WEEK: Phase Down of COVID-19-related FMAP Increase

As of April 1, the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) was reduced from the statutory 6.2%

due to the COVID-19 PHE to 5%. This will continue to be reduced until January 1, 2024, until there is no COVID-19 related FMAP to apply. Below is the timeline of the declining FMAP:

- 5.0% FMAP as of April 1, 2023
- 2.5% FMAP as of July 1, 2023
- 1.5% FMAP as of October 1, 2023
- FMAP phased out as of January 1, 2024

Because the FMAP was associated with states conducting various services related to the public health emergency, such as continuous coverage and COVID-19 testing and treatment, there will be changes to how care is delivered after May 11, when the PHE formally ends. This could mean more cost-sharing for patients for certain services, although Medicaid and CHIP programs will continue to cover pharmaceutical treatments with no cost-sharing for beneficiaries through September 2024. Again, the transition away from the PHE authorities will impact a variety of providers and stakeholders. Please reach out if you have any questions.

ON THE HORIZON

6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium Coming Up!

On May 11, 2023, the Biden Administration and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) will hold the 6th annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium. Public health practitioners, professionals in the aging network, mental health providers, health care professionals, and anyone interested in ensuring the mental health of older adults should save the date and plan to attend this virtual event.

Be on the lookout for additional registration information in the coming weeks and learn more from NCOA!

New Funding Opportunities for the Lifespan Respite Care Program

This week, ACL announced two new funding opportunities to eligible entities under the Lifespan Respite Care Program. The goals of the program include improving equitable access to, and quality of, respite care services to all family caregivers. The first of the funding opportunities is titled, “Lifespan Respite Care Program: State Program Enhancement Grants,” and the second opportunity is titled, “Lifespan Respite Care Program: Grants to New States and States Re-Establishing Their Core Respite Infrastructures.” Both grants funding deadlines are May 15, 2023. For more information, please [click here](#).

Funding Opportunity under the Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program.

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research has a new grant opportunity to advance disability statistics and demographics to inform policy and practice. The main purpose is to conduct activities to advance the use and usefulness of disability statistics and demographic data to inform disability policies and practices toward providing full opportunities and accommodations

for people with disabilities. This includes analyzing disability-relevant nationally representative data, improving methods for surveying people with a wide variety of disabilities, and conducting knowledge translation of findings and related disability data resources. For more information, please [click here](#).

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is June 15th!

During the week of June 15, 2023, The Administration for Community Living will be sharing resources, hosting discussions, and promoting awareness about elder abuse around the themes of:

- Interdisciplinary partnerships
- Intergenerational collaboration
- Intervention & prevention
- Intersectionality of elder abuse
- International elder justice efforts

To find out more information please [click here](#).

RECOMMENDED READS

- *Washington Post* – [Assisted-living homes are rejecting Medicaid and evicting seniors](#)
- *Boston Globe* – [As population ages, new efforts to boost long-term care insurance are surfacing](#)
- *Daily Hampshire Gazette* – [Workforce aid eyed to stabilize nursing homes](#)

Allies for Independence promotes inclusion, equity, and economic security across the lifespan!

Contact us!

[Click to email us.](#)

Connect with us!



@[AdvanceCLASS](#)



[YouTube](#)

Published by Allies for Independence ·

www.alliesforindependence.org

Washington, D.C. ·