



COLORADO
COVERING
KIDS & FAMILIES

MARCH MEETING NOTES

May 19, 2023

MyFriendBen

Brian Hiatt and Kathleen Bottargo, Gary Community Ventures, provided updates on the benefits finder tool, [MyFriendBen](#). The goal of this tool, which is now live, is to show Coloradans which benefits they are entitled to, the cash value of those benefits, how long it takes to apply, and how long it should take to receive benefits. It takes households an average of 15 minutes or less to complete the questions and receive this information. The pilot showed 91% eligibility accuracy for folks using this tool.

The MyFriendBen tool can also help connect Coloradans with patient navigators and assisters. Staff are still working on who are the best resources, at a zip-code level, to connect with users. As of right now, the system is relying on a few statewide partners. Assisters and navigators can share contact information, and provide feedback on resources, with Kathleen at kbottagaro@garycommunity.org. Partners can also request a referral code, which they can send out to clients, and receive relevant data back from MyFriendBen. Organizations can learn more about [partnering with MyFriendBen here](#).

Gary Community Ventures staff have committed to ensuring all program information is up-to-date within one week of any policy or other related changes. Staff will explore the option of integrating with the PEAK system in the next few months.

2023 State Legislative Update

Shoshi Preuss, Colorado Community Health Network, provided an update on the state legislative session. The following bills, related to health coverage, passed:

Medicaid Benefits and Services

- [2023-2024 Long Bill](#) (Effective July 1, 2023)
 - Removes all co-pays for Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program) except for non-emergent use of the Emergency Room.
 - Removes dental cap for adults Health First Colorado members (previously \$1,500)
 - Note: The dental cap for Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) is still in effect at \$1,000/year.
- [SB23-002, Medicaid Reimbursement for Community Health Services](#) (By July 1, 2024)
 - The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) must seek federal authorization to allow community health workers to be reimbursable under Medicaid.
- [SB23-288, Coverage for Doula Services](#) (By July 1, 2024)
 - HCPF must seek federal authorization to cover doula services for pregnant and postpartum Medicaid members.

Medicaid Eligibility and Enrollment

- [HB23-1117, Affidavit Support Eligibility Public Benefits](#) (Effective August 7, 2023)

- Eliminate the prohibition on people with lawful residency (legal permanent residents) from executing an affidavit of support to sponsoring an individual while also receiving public assistance or medical assistance.
- [HB23-1300, Continuous Eligibility Medical Coverage](#) (By April 1, 2024)
 - HCPF must seek federal authorization to extend continuous eligibility (CE) to kids under three, and 12-months CE for adults leaving Colorado Department of Correction facilities. CE to go into effect by January 1, 2026.
 - HCPF must conduct a feasibility study of extending CE for other groups. Study due by January 1, 2026.
- [SB23-182, Temporary Suspension of Medicaid Requirements](#) (Effective immediately)
 - Ensure compliance with federal requirements for unwind.
- [SB23-117, Department of Health Care Policy & Financing Supplemental](#)
 - Supplemental appropriation to HCPF for FY22-23, including funding to assist counties with unwinding the continuous coverage requirement.

Private Insurance

- [HB23-1224, Standardized Health Benefit Plan](#) (Effective immediately)
 - Makes some changes to the Colorado Option, such as giving the DOI more enforcement mechanisms over the plans and requiring Connect for Health Colorado to develop a format for displaying the standardized plans on Connect for Health Colorado.
- [SB23-284, Ensure 12-month Contraception Coverage](#) (Effective August 7, 2023)
 - Requires private insurance companies to reimburse for a 12-month contraceptive prescription at one time.

Consumer Protections

- [HB23-1126, Consumer Reports Not Include Medical Debt Information](#) (Effective August 7, 2023)
 - Defines medical debt and prohibits consumer reporting agencies from including information on medical debt in a credit report.
- [SB23-093, Increase Consumer Protections Medical Transactions](#) (Effective May 4, 2023)
 - Adds consumer protections for medical debt collections by capping interest rates at 3% annually and requires that debt collectors provide noticing and payment plans.
 - Requires health care providers to give an estimate of health-care costs for self-pay patients.

Reproductive Health Bills

This package of bills provide a variety of protections for reproductive health, such as access to abortions and gender-affirming care. All are effective immediately.

- [SB23-188, Protections for Accessing Reproductive Health Care](#) (Effective immediately)
 - Implements a variety of changes related to reproductive health, including protections for people from other states who receive abortions in Colorado and protections for abortion providers.
- [SB23-189, Increasing Access to Reproductive Health Care](#)
 - Creates new requirements related to reproductive health care, including requiring health plans to cover a variety of preventive services, HIV testing and care, sterilization services, and abortion care without cost-sharing (for large employer plans) (by January 1, 2025).

- Prohibits insurance companies and Medicaid from using step therapy for HIV treatment (by July 1, 2027)
- Allows providers to give contraception to minors without notifying the minor's parent or guardian.
- [SB23-190, Deceptive Trade Practice Pregnancy-related Service](#) (Effective immediately)
 - Makes it a deceptive trade practice for providers to falsely claim that they provide abortion, emergency contraceptives, or referrals for these services.

Connect for Health Colorado

Jessalyn Hampton, Connect for Health Colorado, provided legislative updates, tax time enrollment numbers, OmniSalud updates, enrollment numbers by demographic and type, issuer updates, information on the unwind, and outreach resources. View [Connect for Health Colorado's slides](#) for more detailed information.

There were 10,541 total Colorado Connect enrollments for plan year 2023. 27% of enrollments happened with help from a broker, 50% were at an assistance site, and 23% of enrollees did not use assistance to apply.

HCPF Update

Liz Tansey, CKF, shared written updates from HCPF, who could not attend the meeting.

HCPF is hosting quarterly webinars about the end of the PHE and the continuous coverage unwind. The next call is on July 26 at 1:00 p.m. Visit the [state's PHE planning website](#) to watch recordings and [register](#) for the July call.

Working Adults with Disabilities Buy-In program premiums will not start again until May 2024. Typically, Buy-In members are required to earn at least \$1 each month, but during the PHE, work requirements were suspended for existing members. HCPF will start checking for work status again during upcoming renewals. Starting June 1, if an existing member loses employment, and does not gain new employment, they can lose their Buy-In benefits the month the change occurred or the following month, if the change was reported after the 10 day noticing requirements.

Across the country, scammers are calling Medicaid-eligible individuals to request personal banking information. HCPF will never request payment information. View [more information and report scams](#) via the HCPF website. The Consolidated Returned Mail Center, who are contracted with HCPF, may call to verify a member's address. This is not a scam, but members are not required to provide their addresses, and can instead call their counties, or update their addresses via PEAK.

CKF Update

Health First Colorado and CHP+ Manual Available

Covering Kids and Families, in partnership with John Snow, Inc. developed a manual that covers eligibility, application process, enrollment, post-enrollment, and benefits through Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program) and Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+), as well as an overview of many non-MAGI and waiver programs. Read the [Health First Colorado and CHP+ Manual](#). If you have questions or feedback about the manual, send them to ckf@cchn.org.

The Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP) developed a [Guide to Appeals](#) to help assisters and Health First Colorado and CHP+ members understand when and how to appeal. The appeals guide and an instructional webinar are available in English and Spanish. CKF completed the Medicaid Manual, which is now available for use.