

●●● COLORADO ●●●  
**COVERING**  
KIDS & FAMILIES

**MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**

April 16, 2021

**Legislative Session Update**

Alice Steiner, Colorado Community Health Network, provided updates on the 2021 legislative session, which ends in June. Currently, legislators are working on the state budget. Last year, cuts were made to the state budget in anticipation of reduced funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year there is more state revenue and federal funding available. Cuts from last year are being restored, and proposed cuts from this year are not being approved. For example, the adult dental benefit cap will be back up to \$1,500 from the cut to \$1,000. Additionally, the low-income senior dental program cut of \$1 million made last year, was restored this year.

There is a proposal to determine if the state can draw down a federal match for the entirety of the Primary Care Fund, which is about \$25 million.

Alice provided updates on bills she discussed last month:

- [HB21-1198](#) HealthCare Billing Requirements for Indigent Patients
  - Requires hospitals to screen for eligibility for Health First Colorado and discount programs for all patients. Sets out of pocket limits for indigent patients at 80% of Medicare rates and no more than 5% of the patient's income. Hospitals would be required to allow payment plans for individuals that last no more than three years. If a patient has been making payments and a balance remains at the end of three years, the remaining amount would be written off.
  - **Update:** This bill is moving through the process, with a few amendments likely to come. The amendments should not impact the purpose of this bill.
- [SB21-025](#) Family Planning Service for Eligible Individuals
  - Will cover family planning services for people who would be otherwise eligible for Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program), but they are over income, up to 250% of the federal poverty level (FPL).
  - Family planning services are matched by the federal government at 90%.
  - **Update:** This bill had its first hearing at the end of March and is set to move on to appropriations.
- [HB21-1232](#): Standardized Health Benefit Plan Colorado Option
  - Different from previous years because it provides a path for carriers to meet premium reductions.
  - During the first two years health insurance carriers would be required to offer a standardized plan to reduce costs. If costs are not reduced within the first two years Colorado would create its own standardized plan in 2025.
  - **Update:** After a 10-hour hearing, legislators opted to not vote on this bill. The legislators are considering significant amendments to this bill, including an amendment that would allow them to discard all previous language and start from scratch.
- **New bill:** [SB21-194](#): Maternal Health Providers
  - Works to improve outcomes for labor and delivery services, including extending Medicaid and CHIP coverage to 12-months postpartum. It would also require

- insurance carriers to reimburse providers in a manner that promotes high-quality and cost-effective care.
- This bill passed through the health and human services committee on party lines mid-April.

### **Connect for Health Colorado Updates**

Bailey Dvorak, Connect for Health Colorado, provided updates on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) implementation. As a reminder, advanced premium tax credit (APTC) calculations for the 2021 and 2022 plan year have been adjusted. This includes removing the cap of 400% FPL, and a limit of 8.5% of income on premiums. Connect for Health Colorado's eligibility system is now updated to reflect this.

In the eligibility system, current customers can update their information to take advantage of the additional tax credits made available by the ARPA, and do not need a qualifying event to do so. Current customers who would like to switch plans or shop without having a qualified event should wait until the open enrollment period starting May 15. Enrollment will be available through at least August 15.

Connect for Health Colorado encourages uninsured customers, or customers who are newly eligible for financial help to consult with an assister or broker when shopping for a new plan. Uninsured customers can shop anytime between now and August 15. When a new customer enrolls, their plan will start on the first day of the following month. For example, if a customer enrolls on April 30, their coverage will start May 1.

### **PEAK Updates**

Rory Thomes, PEAK Outreach, shared updates made to the PEAK system on April 10. Changes in this build include updates to the homepage, including updates to how users explore benefits, view the frequently asked questions, and access contact information. Moving forward, updated parts of PEAK will be mobile friendly.

The login process was also updated on April 10. Now customers can either use a mobile number or email to log in. Customers can also update their login information, including providing a new email or phone number, as needed.

With the update, customers can now end Medical, Food, or Cash Assistance programs from within their PEAK account, rather than by contacting the county.

For more information, visit the PEAK Outreach website to watch a recorded [webinar on the PEAK updates](#).

### **HCPF Updates**

Lisa Pera, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) shared information about the COVID-19 vaccine. HCPF is working with the Regional Accountable Entities, Community Centered Boards, and other groups to do COVID-19 vaccine outreach to individuals who are vaccine-hesitant, home-bound, or living in underserved communities. Visit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) webpage for [vaccine data](#).

HCPF provided an update on the 5% disregard. Federal rules require states to use the disregard only for individuals whose modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) based income is above the highest applicable income standard under the program Medicaid or CHIP. The

5% income disregard is only applied as a last step in determining eligibility when an individual exceeds the income standard.

### **CKF Updates**

Grace Trautman, CKF, shared information on the CDPHE-mandated pause of the administration of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. Below are resources that are updated as new information becomes available:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention FAQ](#)
- [Answers to tough questions about public health](#)

Shoshi Preuss, CKF, shared that CKF published three blog posts explaining nuances of the ARPA, including how it is relevant in Colorado, and additional resources for understanding these changes. Read the *Understanding the American Rescue Plan Act in Colorado* series:

- [Private and Marketplace Insurance](#)
- [Health First Colorado and CHP+](#)
- [Economic, Housing, and Food Assistance](#)