



COLORADO
COVERING
KIDS & FAMILIES

MONTHLY MEETING NOTES

January 15, 2021

Legislative Session Update

Alice Steiner, Colorado Community Health Network, gave an update about the legislative session. Legislators gavelled in on January 13 and used January 13 – 15 to handle urgent business. This includes making changes to allow for more remote work, fixing issues they did not get to last session, addressing items from the special session, and swearing in new legislators. Legislators will then take a break until February 16 but are available for any urgent business that comes up.

Connect for Health Colorado Updates

Bailey Dvorak, Connect for Health Colorado shared that there are just over 177,000 people enrolled in Connect for Health Colorado, with about a nine percent increase from last year. The Biden administration may re-open a special enrollment period for the federal marketplace, healthcare.gov, but that decision will remain unknown until after the inauguration. If there is a federal special enrollment period Colorado will likely have one as well.

President elect Biden proposed a stimulus plan which includes an increase in Affordable Care Act subsidies and a temporary subsidy for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) continuation. Connect for Health Colorado and CKF will monitor this proposal closely and share updates as they become available.

HCPF Updates

Rebecca Ornelas, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) discussed the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). The PHE was set to expire on January 20, 2021, but was recently extended until April 20, 2021. While the PHE is in effect, Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) members are locked-into coverage, even if income or household size changes would make them no longer eligible.

States received guidance about actions at the end of the PHE in a [December 2020 letter from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid \(CMS\)](#). This letter instructs states on how to conduct an eligibility review for members prior to terminating coverage for ineligible members at the end of the PHE. HCPF is preparing for making updates to the Colorado Benefit Management System (CBMS), knowing they can activate those changes whenever the PHE ends. HCPF plans to conduct redeterminations for all members who appear to be ineligible on the locked-in report and who would have been disenrolled prior to the end of the PHE. Currently, the second most common reason members are in the lock-in group is because they have failed to respond to a request for additional information. To ensure that eligibility is determined on the most up-to-date information, HCPF will send notices to all locked-in members requesting updated information and use that information for an eligibility redetermination at the end of the PHE.

The CMS guidance also requires states to create a post-COVID eligibility and enrollment operational plan that uses a risk-based approach to actions. In addition, HCPF has the opportunity to distribute renewal dates to avoid a future cluster of renewals around the end of the PHE. HCPF will share more information as available.

HCPF published [PM 21-001, Remote Application Assistance](#) allowing assisters at Medical Assistance, Eligibility Application Partner, Presumptive Eligibility, and Certified Application Assistance Sites to assist applicants in applying for Medical Assistance remotely, including by telephone and video conference. Assisters should collect verbal consent from the applicant by completing the [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Verbal Consent form](#) and submit this form with the client's application. This form designates the Assister as a limited Authorized Representative to sign the applicant on behalf of the applicant. These flexibilities are only available during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

HCPF is preparing for the upcoming federal presidential transition by supporting members through the PHE, supporting the vaccine distribution, and caring for members who are currently enrolled in Health First Colorado. HCPF will provide updates as they are available.

There will be changes to how the 1095-B form is distributed. 1095-B is a form that is used when filing taxes to prove the timeframe during which a patient had Health First Colorado or Child Health Plan *Plus* benefits. The 1095-B form is *not required* to file taxes. This year, the 1095-B form will not be mailed to patients, but rather accessible through PEAK, by email request, by written request mailed to HCPF, by phone request, or by request through the patient's county. They will be available by the end of January.

CKF Updates

Shoshi Preuss, CKF, shared about two new blog posts CKF posted at the beginning of the year. The [2020 Year-in-Review blog post](#) discusses successes and challenges for how low-income Coloradans accessed, retained, and paid for health coverage in 2020. It also reviews CKF's advocacy in 2020 and issues on our radar for 2021. The [Emergency Medicaid blog post](#) provides an overview of Emergency Medicaid, including eligibility, services covered, and tips for assisters to talk to clients about Emergency Medicaid.

Next meeting: February 19, 2021