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State/Territory Name: Alaska

State Plan Amendment (SPA) #: 23-0003

This file contains the following documents in the order listed:

- 1) Approval Letter
- 2) CMS 179 Form/Summary Form (with 179-like data)
- 3) Approved SPA Pages

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S2-26-12
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



April 19,2023

Heidi Hedberg
Commissioner
Department of Health
3601 C Street, Suite 902,
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5923

Re: Alaska State Plan Amendment (SPA) 23-0003

Dear Ms. Hedberg:

We have reviewed the proposed amendment and accompanying section 1135 waivers to add section 7.4 Medicaid Disaster Relief for the COVID-19 National Emergency to your Medicaid state plan, as submitted April 4, 2023, under transmittal number (TN) AK-23-0003. This amendment proposes to implement temporary policies, which are different from those policies and procedures otherwise applied under your Medicaid state plan, during the period of the Presidential and Secretarial emergency declarations related to the COVID-19 outbreak (or any renewals thereof).

On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued a proclamation that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency by the authorities vested in him by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and consistent with section 1135 of the Social Security Act (Act). On March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 1135(b) of the Act, the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services invoked his authority to waive or modify certain requirements of titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Act as a result of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the extent necessary, as determined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to ensure that sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of individuals enrolled in the respective programs and to ensure that health care providers that furnish such items and services in good faith, but are unable to comply with one or more of such requirements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, may be reimbursed for such items and services and exempted from sanctions for such noncompliance, absent any determination of fraud or abuse. This authority took effect as of 6PM Eastern Standard Time on March 15, 2020, with a retroactive effective date of March 1, 2020. The emergency period will terminate, and this state plan provision will no longer be in effect, upon termination of the public health emergency, including any extensions.

Pursuant to section 1135(b)(5) of the Act, for the period of the public health emergency, CMS is modifying the requirement at 42 C.F.R. 430.20 that the state submit SPAs related to the COVID-19 public health emergency by the final day of the quarter, to obtain a SPA effective date during the quarter, enabling SPAs submitted after the last day of the quarter to have an effective date in a previous quarter, but no earlier than the effective date of the public health emergency.

The State of Alaska also requested a waiver of public notice requirements applicable to the SPA submission process. Pursuant to section 1135(b)(1)(C) of the Act, CMS is waiving public notice requirements applicable to the SPA submission process. Public notice for SPAs is required under 42 C.F.R. §447.205 for changes in statewide methods and standards for setting Medicaid payment rates, 42 C.F.R. §447.57 for changes to premiums and cost sharing, and 42 C.F.R. §440.386 for changes to Alternative Benefit Plans (ABPs). Pursuant to section 1135(b)(1)(C), CMS is approving the state's request to waive these notice requirements otherwise applicable to SPA submissions.

In addition, the State of Alaska requested a waiver to modify the tribal consultation timeline applicable to this SPA submission process. Pursuant to section 1135(b)(5) of the Act, CMS is also allowing states to modify the timeframes associated with tribal consultation required under section 1902(a)(73) of the Act, including shortening the number of days before submission or conducting consultation after submission of the SPA.

These waivers or modifications of the requirements related to SPA submission timelines, public notice, and tribal consultation apply only with respect to SPAs that meet the following criteria: (1) the SPA provides or increases beneficiary access to items and services related to COVID-19 (such as by waiving or eliminating cost sharing, increasing payment rates or amending Alternative Benefit Plan to add services or providers); (2) the SPA does not restrict or limit payment or services or otherwise burden beneficiaries and providers; and (3) the SPA is temporary, with a specified sunset date that is not later than the last day of the declared COVID-19 public health emergency (or any extension thereof). We nonetheless encourage states to make all relevant information about the SPA available to the public so they are aware of the changes.

We conducted our review of your submittal according to the statutory requirements at section 1902(a) of the Act and implementing regulations. This letter is to inform you that Alaska's Medicaid SPA Transmittal Number AK-23-0003 is approved effective March 1, 2020.

Enclosed is a copy of the CMS-179 summary form and the approved state plan pages.

Page 3 – Heidi Hedberg

Please contact Maria Garza at (206) 615-2542 or by email at Maria.Garza@cms.hhs.gov if you have any questions about this approval. We appreciate the efforts of you and your staff in responding to the needs of the residents of the State of Alaska and the health care community.

Sincerely,

Alissa M.
Deboy -S

Digitally signed by Alissa
M. Deboy -S
Date: 2023.04.19
08:27:09 -04'00'

Alissa Mooney DeBoy
On Behalf of Anne Marie Costello, Deputy Director
Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services

Enclosures

cc:

Emily Ricci, Alaska Deputy Commissioner, at emily.ricci@alaska.gov

Emily Beaulieu, AK State Plan Coordinator, at emily.beaulieu@alaska.gov

**TRANSMITTAL AND NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF
STATE PLAN MATERIAL
FOR: CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES**

1. TRANSMITTAL NUMBER 2 3 — 0 0 0 3 2. STATE AK

3. PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION: TITLE OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT XIX XXI

TO: CENTER DIRECTOR
CENTERS FOR MEDICAID & CHIP SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

4. PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE
03/01/2020

5. FEDERAL STATUTE/REGULATION CITATION
Section 1135 and Title XIX of the SSA

6. FEDERAL BUDGET IMPACT (Amounts in WHOLE dollars)
a. FFY 2023 \$ 0
b. FFY 2023 \$ _____

7. PAGE NUMBER OF THE PLAN SECTION OR ATTACHMENT
Section 7.4 pages 90-98

8. PAGE NUMBER OF THE SUPERSEDED PLAN SECTION OR ATTACHMENT (If Applicable)
AK 7.4 pages 90-98

9. SUBJECT OF AMENDMENT
Correction of Section D, Benefits, #8, to add omitted language from Attachment 4.19-B, page 8 (K&L)

10. GOVERNOR'S REVIEW (Check One)
 GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REPORTED NO COMMENT
 COMMENTS OF GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ENCLOSED
 NO REPLY RECEIVED WITHIN 45 DAYS OF SUBMITTAL
 OTHER, AS SPECIFIED:

11. NAME OF AGENCY OFFICIAL
[REDACTED]
12. TYPED NAME
Emily Ricci
13. TITLE
Deputy Commissioner & Medicaid Director
14. DATE SUBMITTED
4/4/2023

15. RETURN TO
Dept of Health Commissioner's Office
c/o Emily Beaulieu
3601 C Street, Suite 902
Anchorage, AK 99503

FOR CMS USE ONLY

16. DATE RECEIVED
April 4, 2023

17. DATE APPROVED
April 19, 2023

PLAN APPROVED - ONE COPY ATTACHED

18. EFFECTIVE DATE OF APPROVED MATERIAL
March 1, 2020

19. SIGNATURE OF APPROVING OFFICIAL
Alissa M. Deboy -S
Digitally signed by Alissa M. Deboy
Date: 2023.04.19 08:27:30 -04'00'

20. TYPED NAME OF APPROVING OFFICIAL
Alissa Mooney DeBoy

21. TITLE OF APPROVING OFFICIAL
On Behalf of Anne Marie Costello, Deputy Director
Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services

22. REMARKS

Section 7 – General Provisions

7.4. Medicaid Disaster Relief for the COVID-19 National Emergency

On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued a proclamation that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency by the authorities vested in him by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), and consistent with section 1135 of the Social Security Act (Act). On March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 1135(b) of the Act, the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services invoked his authority to waive or modify certain requirements of titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Act as a result of the consequences COVID-19 pandemic, to the extent necessary, as determined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to ensure that sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of individuals enrolled in the respective programs and to ensure that health care providers that furnish such items and services in good faith, but are unable to comply with one or more of such requirements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, may be reimbursed for such items and services and exempted from sanctions for such noncompliance, absent any determination of fraud or abuse. This authority took effect as of 6PM Eastern Standard Time on March 15, 2020, with a retroactive effective date of March 1, 2020. The emergency period will terminate, and waivers will no longer be available, upon termination of the public health emergency, including any extensions.

The State Medicaid agency (agency) seeks to implement the policies and procedures described below, which are different than the policies and procedures otherwise applied under the Medicaid state plan, during the period of the Presidential and Secretarial emergency declarations related to the COVID-19 outbreak (or any renewals thereof), or for any shorter period described below:

Describe shorter period here.

NOTE: States may not elect a period longer than the Presidential or Secretarial emergency declaration (or any renewal thereof). States may not propose changes on this template that restrict or limit payment, services, or eligibility, or otherwise burden beneficiaries and providers.

Request for Waivers under Section 1135

 X The agency seeks the following under section 1135(b)(1)(C) and/or section 1135(b)(5) of the Act:

- a. X SPA submission requirements – the agency requests modification of the requirement to submit the SPA by March 31, 2020, to obtain a SPA effective date during the first calendar quarter of 2020, pursuant to 42 CFR 430.20.
- b. X Public notice requirements – the agency requests waiver of public notice requirements that would otherwise be applicable to this SPA submission. These requirements may include those specified in 42 CFR 440.386 (Alternative Benefit Plans), 42 CFR 447.57(c) (premiums and cost sharing), and 42 CFR 447.205 (public notice of changes in statewide methods and standards for setting payment rates).

- c. Tribal consultation requirements – the agency requests modification of tribal consultation timelines specified in Alaska Medicaid state plan, as described below:

The state requests approval to conduct tribal consultation concurrent to the SPA submission - disseminating a written notice via e-mail upon submission of the SPA and utilizing a shortened timeframe for a meeting and comment.

Section A – Eligibility

- 1. The agency furnishes medical assistance to the following optional groups of individuals described in section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii) or 1902(a)(10)(c) of the Act. This may include the new optional group described at section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XXIII) and 1902(ss) of the Act providing coverage for uninsured individuals.

- 2. The agency furnishes medical assistance to the following populations of individuals described in section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XX) of the Act and 42 CFR 435.218:

- a. All individuals who are described in section 1905(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XX)

Income standard:

-or-

- b. Individuals described in the following categorical populations in section 1905(a) of the Act:

Income standard: _____

- 3. The agency applies less restrictive financial methodologies to individuals excepted from financial methodologies based on modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) as follows.

Less restrictive income methodologies:

Less restrictive resource methodologies:

- 4. The agency considers individuals who are evacuated from the state, who leave the state for medical reasons related to the disaster or public health emergency, or who are otherwise absent from the state due to the disaster or public health emergency and who intend to return to the state, to continue to be residents of the state under 42 CFR 435.403(j)(3).
- 5. The agency provides Medicaid coverage to the following individuals living in the state, who are non-residents:

Non-residents of the state who otherwise meet eligibility requirements and are in the state temporarily. The state will work with the individual's home state to prevent duplicate coverage.

- 6. The agency provides for an extension of the reasonable opportunity period for non-citizens declaring to be in a satisfactory immigration status, if the non-citizen is making a good faith effort to resolve any inconsistencies or obtain any necessary documentation, or the agency is unable to complete the verification process within the 90-day reasonable opportunity period due to the disaster or public health emergency.

Section B – Enrollment

- 1. The agency elects to allow hospitals to make presumptive eligibility determinations for the following additional state plan populations, or for populations in an approved section 1115 demonstration, in accordance with section 1902(a)(47)(B) of the Act and 42 CFR 435.1110, provided that the agency has determined that the hospital is capable of making such determinations.

- 2. The agency designates itself as a qualified entity for purposes of making presumptive eligibility determinations described below in accordance with sections 1920, 1920A, 1920B, and 1920C of the Act and 42 CFR Part 435 Subpart L.

- 3. The agency designates the following entities as qualified entities for purposes of making presumptive eligibility determinations or adds additional populations as described below in accordance with sections 1920, 1920A, 1920B, and 1920C of the Act and 42 CFR Part 435 Subpart L. Indicate if any designated entities are permitted to make presumptive eligibility determinations only for specified populations.

- 4. The agency adopts a total of months (not to exceed 12 months) continuous eligibility for children under age enter age (not to exceed age 19) regardless of changes in circumstances in accordance with section 1902(e)(12) of the Act and 42 CFR 435.926.
- 5. The agency conducts redeterminations of eligibility for individuals excepted from MAGI-based financial methodologies under 42 CFR 435.603(j) once every months (not to exceed 12 months) in accordance with 42 CFR 435.916(b).
- 6. The agency uses the following simplified application(s) to support enrollment in affected areas or for affected individuals (a copy of the simplified application(s) has been submitted to CMS).
 - a. The agency uses a simplified paper application.
 - b. The agency uses a simplified online application.
 - c. The simplified paper or online application is made available for use in call-centers or other telephone applications in affected areas.

Section C – Premiums and Cost Sharing

- 1. The agency suspends deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and other cost sharing charges as follows:

Alaska will not impose cost-sharing for testing services (including in vitro diagnostic products, and including test administration), testing-related services, and treatments for COVID-19, including vaccines, pharmaceuticals, specialized equipment, and therapies, for any quarter in which the increased FMAP is claimed.

- 2. The agency suspends enrollment fees, premiums and similar charges for:
 - a. All beneficiaries
 - b. The following eligibility groups or categorical populations:

Qualified Working Disabled eligibility category under 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XIII) of the Act

- 3. The agency allows waiver of payment of the enrollment fee, premiums and similar charges for undue hardship.

Section D – Benefits*Benefits:*

1. The agency adds the following optional benefits in its state plan (include service descriptions, provider qualifications, and limitations on amount, duration or scope of the benefit):

--

2. X The agency makes the following adjustments to benefits currently covered in the state plan:

- Temporarily revise state plan provisions at Attachment 3.1-K, page six, to allow the provision of Community First Choice Personal Care services to a recipient in an acute care hospital as long as the services are identified in an individual’s personal plan of care, address needs that are not met through the provision of hospital services, are not duplicative of services the hospital is obligated to provide, and are designed to ensure smooth transitions between acute care settings and home and community-based settings, and preserve the individual’s functional abilities.
- Temporarily waive provider requirements as follows:
 - revise provisions located in Attached Sheet to Attachment 3.1, pages 4b (i) and 4c (bullet #1) to allow students who have completed all required coursework with the exception of a practicum and/or internship hours to practice as unlicensed mental health professionals
 - revise provisions located in attached sheet to Attachment 3.1-A page 11a, and Attachment 3.1-K, page 7 to remove the requirement for certifications in First Aid and CPR.
- Temporarily expand state plan provisions regarding pharmacists under the OLP benefit at Attached Sheet to Attachment 3.1-A, page 2, item 6 (d.3) to allow service provision and reimbursement of services provided by qualified and enrolled State Licensed Pharmacists practicing within their authorized scope practice, statewide standing orders authorized by the Alaska Chief Medical Officer, and the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health guidance memo dated April 8, 2020.

3. X The agency assures that newly added benefits or adjustments to benefits comply with all applicable statutory requirements, including the statewideness requirements found at 1902(a)(1), comparability requirements found at 1902(a)(10)(B), and free choice of provider requirements found at 1902(a)(23).

4. X Application to Alternative Benefit Plans (ABP). The state adheres to all ABP provisions in 42 CFR Part 440, Subpart C. This section only applies to states that have an approved ABP(s).

- a. X The agency assures that these newly added and/or adjusted benefits will be made available to individuals receiving services under ABPs.
- b. Individuals receiving services under ABPs will not receive these newly added and/or adjusted benefits, or will only receive the following subset:

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Telehealth:

5. The agency utilizes telehealth in the following manner, which may be different than outlined in the state's approved state plan:

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Drug Benefit:

6. X The agency makes the following adjustments to the day supply or quantity limit for covered outpatient drugs. The agency should only make this modification if its current state plan pages have limits on the amount of medication dispensed.

- | |
|---|
| <p>(1) Temporarily revise state plan provision at Attached Sheet to Attachment 3.1-A, page 4 (3.b) to read: Claims for medications with days' supply up to 68 days shall be permitted unless medication is on the 90-day list, then 90-days will be permitted.</p> <p>(2) Temporarily revise state plan provisions at Attached Sheet to Attachment 3.1-A, page 3b, (4) to waive the requirement for the return of unused unit dose medications dispensed to a LTC facility due to infection control considerations.</p> |
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7. Prior authorization for medications is expanded by automatic renewal without clinical review, or time/quantity extensions.
8. X The agency makes the following payment adjustment to the professional dispensing fee when additional costs are incurred by the providers for delivery. States will need to supply documentation to justify the additional fees.

- | |
|---|
| <p>(1) Temporarily revise state plan provisions at Attachment 4.19-B, page 8 (K&L) to allow for a professional dispensing fee to be reimbursed no more than every 14-days per individual medication strength at \$15.86 for pharmacies located on the road system and \$23.78 for pharmacies not located on the road system. Shipping will be reimbursed regardless of the location of the pharmacy or beneficiary.</p> <p>(2) Covered outpatient drugs dispensed by a retail-based pharmacy (non-physician administered drugs), when a medication's acquisition cost exceeds the standard "lesser of" payment methodology logic, providers may petition for reimbursement at Wholesale Acquisition Cost (WAC) + 1% on a claim-level basis through the point-of-sale and bypass the Federal Upper Limit (FUL) and National Average Drug Acquisition Cost (NADAC).</p> |
|---|

9. X The agency makes exceptions to their published Preferred Drug List if drug shortages occur. This would include options for covering a brand name drug product that is a multi-source drug if a generic drug option is not available.

Section E – Payments

Optional benefits described in Section D:

- 1. Newly added benefits described in Section D are paid using the following methodology:
 - a. Published fee schedules –
 - Effective date (enter date of change): _____
 - Location (list published location): _____
 - b. Other:

Increases to state plan payment methodologies:

- 2. The agency increases payment rates for the following services:

Targeted Case Management (ILP & LTSS)

- a. Payment increases are targeted based on the following criteria:

Modify the reimbursement of ILP and LTSS Targeted Case Management to reflect a per episode rate equal to the existing monthly rate, this increase is reflective of the increased requirements for TCM providers during the PHE.

- b. Payments are increased through:

- i. A supplemental payment or add-on within applicable upper payment limits:

- ii. An increase to rates as described below.

Rates are increased:

Uniformly by the following percentage: _____

Through a modification to published fee schedules –

Effective date (enter date of change): _____

Location (list published location): _____

Up to the Medicare payments for equivalent services.

By the following factors:

[Empty rectangular box]

Payment for services delivered via telehealth:

- 3. For the duration of the emergency, the state authorizes payments for telehealth services that:
 - a. Are not otherwise paid under the Medicaid state plan;
 - b. Differ from payments for the same services when provided face to face;
 - c. Differ from current state plan provisions governing reimbursement for telehealth;

[Empty rectangular box]

- d. Include payment for ancillary costs associated with the delivery of covered services via telehealth, (if applicable), as follows:
 - i. Ancillary cost associated with the originating site for telehealth is incorporated into fee-for-service rates.
 - ii. Ancillary cost associated with the originating site for telehealth is separately reimbursed as an administrative cost by the state when a Medicaid service is delivered.

Other:

- 4. Other payment changes:

[Empty rectangular box]

Section F – Post-Eligibility Treatment of Income

- 1. The state elects to modify the basic personal needs allowance for institutionalized individuals. The basic personal needs allowance is equal to one of the following amounts:
 - a. The individual’s total income
 - b. 300 percent of the SSI federal benefit rate
 - c. Other reasonable amount: _____
- 2. The state elects a new variance to the basic personal needs allowance. (Note: Election of this option is not dependent on a state electing the option described the option in F.1. above.)

The state protects amounts exceeding the basic personal needs allowance for individuals who have the following greater personal needs:

Section G – Other Policies and Procedures Differing from Approved Medicaid State Plan /Additional Information

PRA Disclosure Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0938-1148 (Expires 03/31/2021). The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 to 2 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. Your response is required to receive a waiver under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act. All responses are public and will be made available on the CMS web site. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: CMS, 7500 Security Boulevard, Attn: PRA Reports Clearance Officer, Mail Stop C4-26-05, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850. ***CMS Disclosure*** Please do not send applications, claims, payments, medical records or any documents containing sensitive information to the PRA Reports Clearance Office. Please note that any correspondence not pertaining to the information collection burden approved under the associated OMB control number listed on this form will not be reviewed, forwarded, or retained. If you have questions or concerns regarding where to submit your documents, please contact the Centers for Medicaid & CHIP Services at 410-786-3870.