

## **Table of Contents**

**State/Territory Name: Alaska**

**State Plan Amendment (SPA) #: 23-0001**

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



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February 17, 2023

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

Re: Alaska State Plan Amendment (SPA) 23-0001

Dear Ms. Hedberg:

We have reviewed the proposed amendment to add section 7.4 Medicaid Disaster Relief for the COVID-19 National Emergency to your Medicaid state plan, as submitted under transmittal number (TN) 23-0001. 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 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 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 Plans 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 23-0001 is approved effective March 1, 2020. This SPA is in addition to all previous approved Disaster Relief SPAs, and does not supersede anything approved in those SPAs.

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

Please contact Maria Garza at (206) 615-2542 or by email at [Maria.Garza@cms.hhs.gov](mailto: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: 2023.02.17  
08:05:25 -05'00'

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

Enclosures

Cc: Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner, [emily.ricci@alaska.gov](mailto:emily.ricci@alaska.gov)  
Courtney King, State Plan Coordinator, [courtney.king@alaska.gov](mailto:courtney.king@alaska.gov)  
Emily Beaulieu, State Plan Coordinator, [emily.beaulieu@alaska.gov](mailto: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 1

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

**March 1, 2020 (P&I change)**

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 2024 \$ 0

7. PAGE NUMBER OF THE PLAN SECTION OR ATTACHMENT

Section 7.4 pages 116-123 (new)

8. PAGE NUMBER OF THE SUPERSEDED PLAN SECTION OR ATTACHMENT (If Applicable)

n/a

9. SUBJECT OF AMENDMENT

Disaster relief amendment - submitted to comply with recent CMS guidance regarding the waiver of pharmacy counseling signature requirements during the PHE.

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:

AGENCY OFFICIAL

15. RETURN TO

Dept of Health Commissioner's Office  
c/o Courtney O'Byrne King, MS  
3601 C Street, Suite 902  
Anchorage, AK 99503

12. TYPED NAME

Emily Ricci

13. TITLE

Deputy Commissioner & Medicaid Director

14. DATE SUBMITTED

February 10, 2023

**FOR CMS USE ONLY**

16. DATE RECEIVED

**February 10, 2023**

17. DATE APPROVED

February 17, 2023

**PLAN APPROVED - ONE COPY ATTACHED**

18. EFFECTIVE DATE OF APPROVED MATERIAL

**March 1, 2020**

19. SIGNATURE OF APPROVING OFFICIAL

Alissa M. Deboy -S  
Date: 2023 02.17  
08 05 43 -05'00'

20. TYPED NAME OF APPROVING OFFICIAL

**Alissa Mooney DeBoy**

21. TITLE OF APPROVING OFFICIAL

on behalf of Anne Marie Costello, Deputy Director, CMCS

22. REMARKS

**2/13/23 P&I Change authorized to Box 4 - effective date omitted & new pages**

**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 6 PM 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 the 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 from 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 the 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 to this template that restrict or limit payment, services, or eligibility or otherwise burden beneficiaries and providers.

**Request for Waivers under Section 1135**

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

- a.  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.  Public notice requirements – the agency requests a waiver of public notice requirements that would otherwise apply 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).

TN: 23-0001

Approval Date: February 17, 2023

Effective Date: March 1, 2020

Supersedes TN: New

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

*Please describe the modifications to the timeline.*

**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 in section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XXIII) and 1902(ss) of the Act providing coverage for uninsured individuals.

*Include the name of the optional eligibility group and applicable income and resource standard.*

- 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:

- 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:

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 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.

*Please describe the applicable eligibility groups/populations and any changes to reasonable limitations, performance standards, or other factors.*

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.

*Please describe any limitations related to the populations included or the number of allowable PE periods.*

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.

*Please describe the designated entities or additional populations and any limitations related to the specified populations or the number of allowable PE periods.*

4.  The agency adopts a total of \_\_\_\_ months (not to exceed 12 months) continuous eligibility for children under 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).

TN: 23-0001Approval Date: February 17, 2023Effective Date: March 1, 2020Supersedes TN: New

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).
- The agency uses a simplified paper application.
  - The agency uses a simplified online application.
  - 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:

*Please describe whether the state suspends all cost-sharing or suspends only specified deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, or other cost-sharing charges for specified items and services or for specified eligibility groups consistent with 42 CFR 447.52(d) or for specified income levels consistent with 42 CFR 447.52(g).*

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

*Please list the applicable eligibility groups or populations.*

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

*Please specify the standard(s) and/or criteria the state will use to determine undue hardship.*

### Section D – Benefits

#### Benefits:

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

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

TN: 23-0001

Approval Date: February 17, 2023

Effective Date: March 1, 2020

Supersedes TN: New



3.  The agency assures that newly added benefits or adjustments to benefits comply with all applicable statutory requirements, including the statewide 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.  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 approved ABP(s).
- a.  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:

*Please describe.*

*Telehealth:*

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

*Please describe.*

*Drug Benefit:*

6.  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 limit the amount of medication dispensed.

The requirement for a patient signature documenting their acceptance or refusal of counseling is suspended for the duration of the declared public health emergency. This waiver does not suspend the requirement to counsel, only the requirement for a confirmatory signature on the document.

7.  Prior authorization for medications is expanded by automatic renewal without clinical review or time/quantity extensions.
8.  The agency makes the following payment adjustment to the professional dispensing fee when the providers incur additional costs for delivery. States will need to supply documentation to justify the additional fees.

*Please describe the manner in which professional dispensing fees are adjusted.*

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TN: 23-0001

Approval Date: February 17, 2023

Effective Date: March 1, 2020

Supersedes TN: New

9.  The agency makes exceptions to its 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 the date of the change): \_\_\_\_\_

Location (list published location): \_\_\_\_\_

- b.  Other:

*Describe methodology here.*

#### Increases to state plan payment methodologies:

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

*Please list all that apply.*

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

*Please describe the criteria.*

- b. Payments are increased through:

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

*Please describe.*

- ii.  An increase in rates as described below.

Rates are increased:

- Uniformly by the following percentage: \_\_\_\_\_

- Through a modification to published fee schedules –

Effective date (enter the date of the change): \_\_\_\_\_

Location (list published location): \_\_\_\_\_

- Up to the Medicare payments for equivalent services.

- By the following factors:

TN: 23-0001

Approval Date: February 17, 2023

Effective Date: March 1, 2020

Supersedes TN: New

*Please describe.*

*Payment for services delivered via telehealth:*

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

*Describe telehealth payment variation.*

- Include payment for ancillary costs associated with the delivery of covered services via telehealth (if applicable) as follows:
  - The ancillary cost associated with the originating site for telehealth is incorporated into fee-for-service rates.
  - The 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:

*Please describe.*

**Section F – Post-Eligibility Treatment of Income**

- 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:
  - The individual's total income
  - 300 percent of the SSI federal benefit rate
  - Other reasonable amounts: \_\_\_\_\_
- 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:

*Please describe the group or groups of individuals with greater needs and the amount(s) protected for each group or groups.*

TN: 23-0001

Approval Date: February 17, 2023

Effective Date: March 1, 2020

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**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 website. 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.

TN: 23-0001Approval Date: February 17, 2023Effective Date: March 1, 2020Supersedes TN: New

\*This SPA is in addition to all previously approved disaster relief SPAs and does not supersede anything approved in those SPAs