

APPENDIX K: Emergency Preparedness and Response and COVID-19 Addendum

Background:

This standalone appendix may be utilized by the state during emergency situations to request amendments to its approved waiver, to multiple approved waivers in the state, and/or to all approved waivers in the state. It includes actions that states can take under the existing Section 1915(c) home and community-based waiver authority in order to respond to an emergency. Other activities may require the use of various other authorities such as the Section 1115 demonstrations or the Section 1135 authorities.¹ This appendix may be applied retroactively as needed by the state. Public notice requirements normally applicable under 1915(c) do not apply to information contained in this Appendix.

Appendix K-1: General Information

General Information:

A. State: Montana

B. Waiver Title(s):

Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based Waiver

Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

C. Control Number(s):

MT-0148.R06.03, MT-0208.R06.03, MT 0455 R02 06

D. Type of Emergency (The state may check more than one box):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pandemic or Epidemic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural Disaster
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Security Emergency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify):

D. **Brief Description of Emergency.** *In no more than one paragraph each*, briefly describe the: 1) nature of emergency; 2) number of individuals affected and the state’s mechanism to identify individuals at risk; 3) roles of state, local and other entities involved in approved waiver operations; and 4) expected changes needed to service delivery methods, if applicable. The state should provide this information for each emergency checked if those emergencies affect different geographic areas and require different changes to the waiver.

On March 13, 2020, as authorized under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (the “Stafford Act”), President Donald J. Trump declared a state of emergency resulting from the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. On January 31, 2020, pursuant to the Public Health Services Act, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar declared a public health emergency. On March 12, 2020, Governor Steve Bullock issued an [executive order](#) declaring a state of emergency related to the continued spread of COVID-19 to allow the governor to direct a coordinated response to the outbreak of communicable disease. This includes mobilizing all available state resources, such as emergency funds or personnel from the National Guard. It also allows the governor to take additional steps to ease regulatory requirements, continue federal and multi-state coordination, and ensure continued access to critical services for the State’s most vulnerable.

The novel COVID-19 pandemic has already begun to place unprecedented burdens on Montana’s health care programs and systems. Per the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), as of March 31, 2020, there are 177 reported COVID-19 cases; this number is expected to grow as more people become tested and the virus spreads to other communities in Montana, increasing the risk of exposure for the State’s residents. Montana has three approved 1915(c) waivers with 5400 participants, many of which are among the most vulnerable and susceptible to COVID-19. Health care workers caring for patients with COVID-19, individuals who have had close contact with persons with COVID-19, and travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring are all at elevated risk of exposure. Montana’s knowledge of COVID-19 is still rapidly evolving.

Montana has received approval to waive certain Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) requirements to ensure sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of individuals under 1135 of the Social Security Act. A number of requirements Montana has committed to in its Medicaid state plan and waiver applications are dependent on staff and provider ability to perform tasks. Due to the evolving nature of this crisis, we may reach a point where we must adjust service delivery methods, suspend home visits, and shift workload priorities due to staff shortages to in order to meet immediate health and safety needs

This amendment will apply waiver-wide for each waiver included in this Appendix, to all individuals impacted by the virus or the response to the virus.

F. Proposed Effective Date: Start Date: 01/27/2020 Anticipated End Date: 07/27/2020

G. Description of Transition Plan.

Individuals will transition to pre-emergency service status as soon as circumstances allow. Individual needs will be reassessed, as necessary, on a case by case basis following the return to pre-emergency services.

H. Geographic Areas Affected:

Statewide.

I. Description of State Disaster Plan (if available) *Reference to external documents is acceptable:*

N/A.

Appendix K-2: Temporary or Emergency-Specific Amendment to Approved Waiver

Temporary or Emergency-Specific Amendment to Approved Waiver:

These are changes that, while directly related to the state’s response to an emergency situation, require amendment to the approved waiver document. These changes are time limited and tied specifically to individuals impacted by the emergency. Permanent or long-ranging changes will need to be incorporated into the main appendices of the waiver, via an amendment request in the waiver management system (WMS) upon advice from CMS.

a. ___ Access and Eligibility:

i. ___ Temporarily increase the cost limits for entry into the waiver.

[Provide explanation of changes and specify the temporary cost limit.]

N/A

ii. ___ Temporarily modify additional targeting criteria.

[Explanation of changes]

b. X Services

i. ___ Temporarily modify service scope or coverage.

[Complete Section A- Services to be Added/Modified During an Emergency.]

ii. X Temporarily exceed service limitations (including limits on sets of services as described in Appendix C-4) or requirements for amount, duration, and prior authorization to address health and welfare issues presented by the emergency.

[Explanation of changes]

Implement a temporary increase in the amount or duration and waive limits of prior authorization on the following services within the waivers necessary to address issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

- Respite

MT-0148.R06.03 Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based Waiver

- Companion
- Respite
- Personal Assistance Services
- Non-Medical Transportation

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

- Homemaker Chore

Note: Respite limits may be extended beyond 30 days annually without requesting a variance in order to meet the immediate health and safety needs of participants. The state has mechanisms in place to prevent duplicate billing for both institutional and HCB services when respite exceeds 30 days, specifically in institutional settings.

iii. X Temporarily add services to the waiver to address the emergency situation (for example, emergency counseling; heightened case management to address emergency needs; emergency medical supplies and equipment; individually directed goods and services; ancillary services to establish temporary residences for dislocated waiver enrollees; necessary technology; emergency evacuation transportation outside of the scope of non-emergency transportation or transportation already provided through the waiver).

[Complete Section A-Services to be Added/Modified During an Emergency]

The state seeks to add the service Mental Health Group Home to MT 0455 R02 05 (Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services). See attached Section A.

iv. X Temporarily expand setting(s) where services may be provided (e.g. hotels, shelters, schools, churches). Note for respite services only, the state should indicate any facility-based settings and indicate whether room and board is included:

[Explanation of modification, and advisement if room and board is included in the respite rate]:

Permit the following services to be delivered in a participant's home environment or alternative provider or community setting:

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

- Day Supports & Activities
- Retirement Services,
- Supported Employment-Follow Along Support and Individual Employment Support).
- Personal Care
- Companion
- Personal Supports
- Homemaker
- Residential Habilitation

MT-0148.R06.03 Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based Waiver

- Adult Day Health
- Day Habilitation
- Supported Living

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

- Adult Day Health

Additional settings include:

- The private home of the participant or a family member of the participant;
- A provider owned or controlled or extended family home;
- The private home of a direct care provider;
- Community center or designated community gathering center;
- Hotel/paid lodging;
- Newly rented room;
- Other residential setting; or
- Telework settings.

v. ___ Temporarily provide services in out of state settings (if not already permitted in the state's approved waiver). [Explanation of changes]

c. **X** **Temporarily permit payment for services rendered by family caregivers or legally responsible individuals if not already permitted under the waiver.** Indicate the services to which this will apply and the safeguards to ensure that individuals receive necessary services as authorized in the plan of care, and the procedures that are used to ensure that payments are made for services rendered.

For services that currently allow Relative and Legal Guardian to deliver the service, the state will add Legally Responsible Person as an allowable caregiver to be paid for the following services:

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

- Day Supports and Activities
- Homemaker
- Residential Habilitation
- Respite
- Companion Services
- Personal Care
- Personal Supports
- Retirement Services
- Specialized Child Care for Medically Fragile Children
- Supported Employment-Follow Along Support
- Supported Employment- Co-Worker Support
- Supported Employment- Individual Employment Support
- Supported Employment- Small Group Employment

MT-0148.R06.03 Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based Waiver

- Day Habilitation

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services *

- Personal Assistant Attendant
- Specially Trained Attendant

* SDMI waiver will ensure payment to family caregivers or legally responsible individuals by authorizing case management team to issue pass thru payments to the provider.

d. **X** **Temporarily modify provider qualifications (for example, expand provider pool, temporarily modify or suspend licensure and certification requirements).**

i. **X** **Temporarily modify provider qualifications.**

All Waivers

Expand provider pool by allowing any enrolled waiver provider to work in all three waivers.

Temporarily extend deadlines for all training requirements for 60 days from the original due date.

All direct care staff should continue to receive training on the participant's plan of care for whom they are providing support. Training on the plan of care must consist of basic health and safety support needs for that individual.

Providers must continue to ensure that direct care staff are able to demonstrate competency in the skills and techniques necessary to perform their assigned tasks under the participant's plan of care.

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Services included in modification of provider qualifications:

- Day Supports and Activities
- Homemaker
- Residential Habilitation
- Respite
- Companion Services
- Personal Care
- Personal Supports
- Retirement Services
- Supported Employment-Follow Along Support
- Supported Employment- Co-Worker Support
- Supported Employment- Individual Employment Support
- Supported Employment- Small Group Employment

MT-0148.R06.03 Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based Waiver

Temporarily suspend the training requirements for the duration of COVID 19 at the provider's discretion.

- Personal Assistance Services
- Day Habilitation
- Adult Day Health

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

Temporarily suspend the training requirements for the duration of COVID 19 at the provider's discretion.

- Personal Assistance Services
- Specially Trained Attendant
- Habilitation Aide

ii. **X** **Temporarily modify provider types.**

[Provide explanation of changes, list each service affected, and the changes in the provider type for each service].

All Waivers

Expand provider types for specialized equipment and supplies to purchase items from nontraditional vendors who have necessary items in stock when supply or cost impacts occur due to COVID 19 on a case by case basis.

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

Mental Health Centers will provide services in the proposed Mental Health Group Home Service in Section A. This will allow Mental Health Centers to provide this service without having to become a HCBS provider type.

iii. X Temporarily modify licensure or other requirements for settings where waiver services are furnished.

[Provide explanation of changes, description of facilities to be utilized and list each service provided in each facility utilized.]

Suspend periodic licensing and quality reviews of provider agencies throughout the duration of the pandemic. Allow provider flexibility in daytime staffing levels as long as care quality is retained.

e. X Temporarily modify processes for level of care evaluations or re-evaluations (within regulatory requirements). [Describe]

Temporarily modify processes for initial level of care for waiver eligibility to allow evaluations to be conducted via telephone or other interactive electronic communication. Telephonic or other remote methods will be conducted with HIPAA requirements, to the extent possible, but with recognition of the Office of Civil Rights is not enforcing certain requirements for good faith communications during the period of the national emergency see <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html>.

f. ___ Temporarily increase payment rates.

[Provide an explanation for the increase. List the provider types, rates by service, and specify whether this change is based on a rate development method that is different from the current approved waiver (and if different, specify and explain the rate development method). If the rate varies by provider, list the rate by service and by provider.]

g. X Temporarily modify person-centered service plan development process and individual(s) responsible for person-centered service plan development, including qualifications.

[Describe any modifications including qualifications of individuals responsible for service plan development, and address Participant Safeguards. Also include strategies to ensure that services are received as authorized.]

Allow assessments to be modified to contain information that can be completed through telephonic and/or electronic interview/observations, allow meetings to be conducted virtually including telephonic or other electronic methods and permit electronic signatures.

The state will ensure the person-centered service Plan of Care is modified to allow for additional supports/and or services to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The specificity of such services including amount, duration and scope will be appended as soon as possible to ensure that the specific service is delineated accordingly to the date it began to be received. The Plan of Care will be updated no later than 30 days from the date the service was initiated.

Plans of Care that are due to expire within the next 60 days require case management contact to the participant using allowable remote contact methods to verify with the participant or representative that the current Plan of Care assessment and service, including providers, remain acceptable and approvable for the upcoming year. The state will verify by obtaining electronic signatures from service providers and the individual or representative, in accordance with the state's HIPAA requirements. Allow Plan of Care teams to temporarily suspend actions or activities that do not compromise the health and welfare of participants with the informed consent of the individual.

If requested and/or necessary, modifications to the Plan of Care may be made, as driven by individualized participant need, circumstance, and consent reviewed on an individualized basis, without the input of the entire Plan of Care team.

h. X Temporarily modify incident reporting requirements, medication management or other participant safeguards to ensure individual health and welfare, and to account for emergency circumstances. [Explanation of changes]

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Require reporting of suspected exposure, symptoms of, and/or confirmation of diagnosis of COVID 19 in incident management data systems. Incidents that meet critical threshold will be reported within 8 hours. Incidents that meet reportable threshold will be entered into the data management system within 48 hours. COVID 19 related incidents shall be reviewed daily by regional managers. Recommended safeguards and precautions will be discussed with the members service providers.

Allow medication assistance to be delivered telephonically or via electronic communication for those members who can respond to verbal prompting.

Extend medication certification for 60 days past the current individual expiration date. Re-certification will be completed as soon as possible once the emergency is declared over, but not longer than 90 days following the end of the declared emergency.

MT-0148.R06.03 Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based Waiver

Require reporting of suspected exposure, symptoms of, and/or confirmation of diagnosis of COVID 19 in incident management data systems within 2 days. The incident tracking system has been updated to include a COVID-19 indicator.

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

Require reporting of suspected exposure, symptoms of, and/or confirmation of diagnosis of COVID 19 in incident management data systems within 2 days. The incident tracking system has been updated to include a COVID-19 indicator.

All Waivers

Montana would like to delay 372 reporting, quality reporting, and other reporting, for 60 days.

- i. **X Temporarily allow for payment for services for the purpose of supporting waiver participants in an acute care hospital or short-term institutional stay when necessary supports (including communication and intensive personal care) are not available in that setting, or when the individual requires those services for communication and behavioral stabilization, and such services are not covered in such settings.**

[Specify the services.]

Allow for payment of services for the purpose of supporting a participant when temporarily institutionalized in a nursing facility, swing bed, critical access hospital or acute care hospital, for a COVID 19-related illness. This is specifically for the purpose of providing additional supports for communication, behavior and/or extensive personal supports and such services are not covered in such settings.

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

- Residential Habilitation
- Day Supports and Activities
- Retirement Services
- Personal Supports
- Companion
- Adult Foster

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

- Specially Trained Attendant
- Life Coach

j. X Temporarily include retainer payments to address emergency related issues.

[Describe the circumstances under which such payments are authorized and applicable limits on their duration. Retainer payments are available for habilitation and personal care only.]

Add or increase retainer payments for waiver providers of services identified as habilitation services that include a component of personal care and/or personal care. Retainer payments shall be available when the participant is hospitalized or otherwise unavailable to participate in habilitative services for the duration of COVID 19 related absences. The retainer time limit will not exceed the lesser of 30 consecutive days or the number of days for which the state authorizes a payment for “bed hold” in nursing facilities.

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

- Adult Foster
- Assisted Living
- Companion Services
- Day Supports and Activities
- Personal Care Services
- Residential Habilitation
- Retirement Services
- Supported Employment Follow Along Support*
- Supported Employment Individual Employment Support*
- Supported Employment- Small Group Employment*

MT-0148.R06.03 Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based Waiver

- Residential Habilitation
- Post-Acute Rehabilitation Services
- Supported Living
- Adult Day Health
- Day Habilitation
- Personal Care Services
- Private Duty Nursing

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

- Residential Habilitation
- Personal Care Services
- Specially Trained Attendant
- Private Duty Nursing

* Supported employment includes habilitation services that include a component of personal care needed to stabilize and maintain a member in a competitive, customized, or self-employment.

k. ___ Temporarily institute or expand opportunities for self-direction.

[Provide an overview and any expansion of self-direction opportunities including a list of services that may be self-directed and an overview of participant safeguards.]

l. ___ Increase Factor C.

[Explain the reason for the increase and list the current approved Factor C as well as the proposed revised Factor C]

m. X Other Changes Necessary [For example, any changes to billing processes, use of contracted entities or any other changes needed by the State to address imminent needs of individuals in the waiver program]. [Explanation of changes]

MT-0208.R06.03 Montana Home and Community Based Waiver for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
Providers may be reimbursed for tiered services at the tier that is prior authorized for the service list below, provided that daytime staffing hours never fall below 80% of the lower end of the tier threshold.

- Residential Habilitation- Congregate Living
- Residential Habilitation- Supported Living
- Day Supports and Activities
- Retirement Services
- Supported Employment- Small Group Employment
- Supported Employment- Follow Along

Appendix K Addendum: COVID-19 Pandemic Response

1. HCBS Regulations

- a. Not comply with the HCBS settings requirement at 42 CFR 441.301(c)(4)(vi)(D) that individuals are able to have visitors of their choosing at any time, for settings added after March 17, 2014, to minimize the spread of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Services

- a. Add an electronic method of service delivery (e.g., telephonic) allowing services to continue to be provided remotely in the home setting for:
 - i. Case management
 - ii. Personal care services that only require verbal cueing
 - iii. In-home habilitation
 - iv. Monthly monitoring (i.e., in order to meet the reasonable indication of need for services requirement in 1915(c) waivers).
 - v. Other [Describe]:

[Redacted]

- b. Add home-delivered meals
- c. Add medical supplies, equipment and appliances (over and above that which is in the state plan)
- d. Add Assistive Technology

3. Conflict of Interest: The state is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic personnel crisis by authorizing case management entities to provide direct services. Therefore, the case management entity qualifies under 42 CFR 441.301(c)(1)(vi) as the only willing and qualified entity.

- a. Current safeguards authorized in the approved waiver will apply to these entities.
- b. Additional safeguards listed below will apply to these entities.

Documentation in the participant's record.

4. Provider Qualifications

- a. Allow spouses and parents of minor children to provide personal care services
- b. Allow a family member to be paid to render services to an individual.
- c. Allow other practitioners in lieu of approved providers within the waiver. *[Indicate the providers and their qualifications]*

MT 0455 R02 06 Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services

- Mental Health Group Homes that are licensed mental health center with a group home endorsement.

- d. Modify service providers for home-delivered meals to allow for additional providers, including non-traditional providers.

5. Processes

- a. Allow an extension for reassessments and reevaluations for up to one year past the due date.
- b. Allow the option to conduct evaluations, assessments, and person-centered service planning meetings virtually/remotely in lieu of face-to-face meetings.
- c. Adjust prior approval/authorization elements approved in waiver.
- d. Adjust assessment requirements
- e. Add an electronic method of signing off on required documents such as the person-centered service plan.

Contact Person(s)

A. The Medicaid agency representative with whom CMS should communicate regarding the request:

First Name: Marie
Last Name Matthews
Title: State Medicaid Director
Agency: MT Public Health and Human Services
Address 1: PO Box 4210
Address 2: 111 North Sanders
City Helena
State MT
Zip Code 59620
Telephone: 406-444-4084
E-mail mmatthews@mt.gov
Fax Number Click or tap here to enter text.

B. If applicable, the State operating agency representative with whom CMS should communicate regarding the waiver is:

First Name: Same as above
Last Name Click or tap here to enter text.
Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
Agency: Click or tap here to enter text.
Address 1: Click or tap here to enter text.
Address 2: Click or tap here to enter text.
City Click or tap here to enter text.
State Click or tap here to enter text.
Zip Code Click or tap here to enter text.
Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.
E-mail Click or tap here to enter text.
Fax Number Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Authorizing Signature

Signature: _____ **Date:** 4/19/2020

Marie Matthews
State Medicaid Director or Designee

First Name: *Marie*
Last Name *Matthews*
Title: State Medicaid Director
Agency: MT Public Health & Human Services
Address 1: PO Box 4210
Address 2: 111 North Sanders
City Helena
State MT
Zip Code 59620
Telephone: 406-444-4084
E-mail mmatthews@mt.gov
Fax Number Click or tap here to enter text.

Section A---Services to be Added/Modified During an Emergency

Complete for each service added during a time of emergency. For services in the approved waiver that the state is temporarily modifying, enter the entire service definition and highlight the change. State laws, regulations and policies referenced in the specification should be readily available to CMS upon request through the Medicaid agency or the operating agency (if applicable).

Service Title:		Mental Health Group Home				
<i>Complete this part for a renewal application or a new waiver that replaces an existing waiver. Select one:</i>						
Service Definition (Scope):						
<p>1. Mental Health Group Home is a bundled service that may include: personal assistance supports or habilitation to meet the specific needs of each resident, homemaker services, medication management and oversight, social activities, personal care, recreational activities at least twice a week, transportation, medical escort, and 24-hour on-site awake staff to meet the needs of the residents and provide supervision for safety and security.</p>						
Specify applicable (if any) limits on the amount, frequency, or duration of this service:						
N/A						
Provider Category(s) (check one or both):		<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual. List types:		<input type="checkbox"/>	Agency. List the types of agencies:
					Mental Health Centers	
Specify whether the service may be provided by (check each that applies):		<input type="checkbox"/>	Legally Responsible Person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relative/Legal Guardian	
Provider Qualifications (provide the following information for each type of provider):						
Provider Type:	License (specify)	Certificate (specify)		Other Standard (specify)		
Mental Health Center	Group Home Licensing			Group Home Endorsement		
Verification of Provider Qualifications						
Provider Type:	Entity Responsible for Verification:			Frequency of Verification		
Mental Health Center	Department of Public Health and Human Services/ Fiscal Intermediary Contractor			Annually		
Service Delivery Method (check each that applies):		<input type="checkbox"/>	Participant-directed as specified in Appendix E		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Provider managed



ⁱ Numerous changes that the state may want to make may necessitate authority outside of the scope of section 1915(c) authority. States interested in changes to administrative claiming or changes that require section 1115 or section 1135 authority should engage CMS in a discussion as soon as possible. Some examples may include: (a) changes to administrative activities, such as the establishment of a hotline; or (b) suspension of general Medicaid rules that are not addressed under section 1915(c) such as payment rules or eligibility rules or suspension of provisions of section 1902(a) to which 1915(c) is typically bound.