



Washington Weekly!

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Administration

CMS Expands MPF in Five New States

On Monday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), awarded approximately \$25 million in planning grants to five new States and territories to expand access to home and community-based services (HCBS) through Medicaid's Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration program. With these awards, 41 States and territories across the country will now participate in MFP. Awards of up to \$5 million are being announced for Illinois, Kansas, and New Hampshire, as well as for American Samoa and Puerto Rico – the first time MFP grants have been made available to territories. These awards will support the early planning phase for their MFP programs. This includes:

- Establishing partnerships with community stakeholders, including those representing diverse and underserved populations, Tribal entities and governments, key State and local agencies (such as State and local public housing authorities), and community-based organizations;
- Conducting system assessments to better understand how HCBS support local residents;
- Developing community transition programs;
- Establishing or enhancing Medicaid HCBS quality improvement programs; and
- Recruiting HCBS providers as well as expert providers for transition coordination and technical assistance.

CMS Announces Latest Enrollment for Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the **latest enrollment figures** for Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As of May 2022, 64,553,288 people are enrolled in Medicare. This is an increase of 103,837 since the last report. About 12 million individuals are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, so are counted in the enrollment figures for both programs. Detailed enrollment data can be viewed [here](#). As of May 2022, 88,978,791 of people are enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP. This is an increase of 677,711 since the last report. For more information on Medicaid/CHIP enrollment, including enrollment trends, visit [here](#).

CIA Makes Compensation Payments for HAVANA Syndrome-Related TBIs

The CIA has begun to make compensation payments to current and former officers who sustained traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) from a series of mysterious health incidents, referred to as the "HAVANA Syndrome." Several officers began reporting TBI-like symptoms beginning in 2016 while serving in Havana. Since then, government employees and family members in other locations around the world have also reported symptoms. Legislation passed last year to authorize up to \$187,3000 in compensation.

The State Department and the C.I.A. have since established rules for diagnosis of TBI and for establishing that such brain injury is in connection with “war, insurgency, hostile act, terrorist activity or other incidents” designated by the Secretary of State or the director of the C.I.A. A document published in the *Federal Register* August 12, supplements an interim final rule published on June 30, 2022, to provide that physicians performing a diagnosis may be certified by either the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) or the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPMR).

CMS Investing Funding to 59 Navigator Organizations to Help with Open Enrollment

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is investing \$98.9 million in grant funding to 59 returning Navigator organizations for the 2023 Open Enrollment Period to help consumers navigate enrollment through the Marketplace, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and make health coverage more equitable and accessible to everyone. These awards will enable Navigator organizations to retain staff and add to the more than 1,500 existing Navigators who were trained to help consumers find affordable, comprehensive health coverage in nearly every HealthCare.gov State and county during the 2022 open enrollment period.

Navigators help consumers prepare applications to establish eligibility and enroll in coverage through the Marketplaces and potentially qualify for an insurance affordability program. They also provide outreach and education to raise awareness about the Marketplaces, and refer consumers to health insurance ombudsman and consumer assistance programs when necessary. Navigators operate year-round increasing awareness among the remaining uninsured about the coverage options available to them, helping consumers find affordable coverage that meets their needs, and assisting consumers beyond the enrollment process to ensure they're equipped with the tools and resources needed to utilize and maintain their health coverage all year. Navigators must complete comprehensive federal Navigator training, criminal background checks, and State training and registration (when applicable), prior to assisting consumers. Read more [here](#).

CMS Issues Informational Bulletin for Improve Nursing Home Care

On Monday, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued an **informational bulletin** detailing actions that States can take using existing Medicaid authorities to drive better health outcomes for nursing home residents and improve staff pay, training, and retention efforts. The informational bulletin – issued by CMS’ Centers for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) – also provides examples of current State Medicaid initiatives to support this work.

CMS stresses that it continues to encourage States to achieve a more equitable balance between the share of spending and use of services and supports delivered in home and community-based settings relative to institutional care like nursing homes. CMS is committed to strengthening the availability of Medicaid-covered home and community-based services (HCBS) as an alternative to institutional care.

Federal Proposed Rules

CMS Solicits Public Comments on Coverage of Seat Elevation and Standing Systems in Power Wheelchairs

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) is accepting public comments through Wednesday, September 14, on Medicare coverage for seat elevation and standing systems in power wheelchairs. Medicare prohibits coverage presently as it views these systems as “not primarily medical in nature.” Yet, seat elevation and standing systems in power wheelchairs are vital to many people to be able to:

- Safely transfer from a wheelchair to another surface (toileting, bathing, etc.), particularly if it is not level with their chair;
- Function independently at home as much as possible (cooking, cleaning, grooming, dressing); and

- Improve circulation, bone strength, and skin health, along with other medical benefits when spending long periods of time in a wheelchair.

More than 1,000 comments have been received to date. You can read the full announcement [here](#). Instructions on submitting comments can be found [here](#).

Reports and Resources

CMS Releases New Report on MFP

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released [a new report](#) on how Money Follows the Person (MFP) has helped facilitate more than 107,000 transitions out of institutional settings since 2008. It also indicates that, thanks in part to programs like MFP, more than 85% of people who used Medicaid long-term services and supports in 2019 received HCBS rather than institutional services. First authorized in 2006, MFP has provided States with more than \$4 billion to support people who choose to transition out of institutions and back into their homes and communities. For more information on MFP, visit [Medicaid.gov](#)

The MFP demonstration, established by Congress through the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, enables State Medicaid programs to help Medicaid beneficiaries who live in institutions transition into the community, and gives people with disabilities and older adults more choice in deciding where to live and to receive long-term services and supports. MFP grantee States are primarily transitioning four targeted populations (which may include individuals with a brain injury):

- older adults;
- people with physical disabilities;
- people with intellectual or developmental disabilities; and
- people with severe mental illness.

Learn more [here](#).

ABCNews.com Features Research on Caregivers

Research from the NIDILRR-funded [Center for Research, Training, and Dissemination of Family Support for People with Disabilities Across the Life Course](#) was highlighted in an article, [COVID-19's negative impact on caregivers and four ways to help them](#), at ABCNews.com. The article and accompanying video highlight findings from [Family caregiving during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), the Center's survey of caregivers, that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a greater impact on the mental, physical, and financial health of caregivers than non-caregivers, particularly those who are women, younger, and from lower income families.

ODEP Report Highlights the Digital Divide Among People with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Labor's [Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#) has published a report, [Disability and the Digital Divide: Internet Subscriptions, Internet Use, and Employment Outcomes](#) (PDF). The report explores how the gap in access to both computing devices and the Internet disproportionately impacts people with disabilities. The report also examines how this gap creates barriers to the ability of workers and job seekers with disabilities to effectively prepare for, obtain, and succeed in employment.

CSG Publishes Report for Policymakers on Hiring People with Disabilities

The Council of State Governments (CSG), in collaboration with ODEP's State Exchange on Employment & Disability, published a report designed to inform policymakers on "State as a model employer" policies and practices to recruit, hire and retain workers with disabilities. The report, "The State as a Model Employer of People with Disabilities," explores strategies States can use to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility principles within the public-sector workforce. Read the more [here](#).

Upcoming Webinars and Conferences

TARC and TAL Offer Webinar on Being Involved in the Brain Injury Community

On August 31, 2022, from 2:30-4:30pm (ET), the TBI Technical Resource Center (TARC) and the TBI Advisory and Leadership Group (TAL-Group) are presenting the webinar, "Keeping the Passion Alive: Getting and Staying Involved in the Brain Injury Community." The purpose is to learn more about how survivors can become involved and stay actively engaged in State and national brain injury initiatives. Register [here](#).

ODEP Offer Webinar on Direct Support Professional Careers for People with Disabilities

The Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP) Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities Center is holding a webinar, "Direct Support Professional Careers for People with Disabilities," on August 31 from 2:30pm – 4:00pm (ET). Despite the critical work of direct support professionals (DSPs), the profession faces challenges including labor shortages, high turnover, and low wages. Yet, especially in States that have taken steps forward mitigating these barriers, the DSP profession can offer flexibility, progressive wages, benefits, and inclusive, accessible training to improve skills and care for clients. In this webinar, experts from the field will share their experiences in creating opportunities for people with disabilities to work as DSPs using customized employment and reasonable accommodations. Register [here](#).

AUCD Plans In-Person Conference on Health Equity

AUCD plans an in-person conference in November to take a deeper dive into *Health Equity*, the social determinants of health, and the steps needed to ensure that every person is provided the best opportunities possible. The conference is scheduled for November 13-16. Save the date and register by October 22. The AUCD 2022 Conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Washington. More information about the Marquis, including access to the hotel room block, will be available on September 1. Everyone can also have the opportunity to access the main plenary sessions which will be available via livestreaming. [To learn more about livestreaming and to register for the virtual package, please visit the To learn more about livestreaming and to register for the virtual package, please visit the Conference site on September 1. on September 1.](#)

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BREAKING NEW GROUND



33rd Annual State of the States
in Head Injury Virtual Event

September 7 - 9, 2022

NASHIA

The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government
in promoting partnerships and building systems
to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.

Support States. Grow Leaders. Connect Partners.



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