

Episode 4: Reimagining Medicaid, How Medicaid Can Help Address Social Determinants of Health

Take Action!

HIV providers can do the following to urge state Medicaid programs and Medicaid managed care plans to do more to address social determinants of health:

- Find out if your state Medicaid agency has an 1115 waiver or is considering one by checking out the CMS [website](#) or [contacting](#) your state Medicaid director.
- Weigh in through the public comment process to support the waiver and note the importance of services that address social determinants of health for people with HIV.
- Encourage Medicaid managed care plans in your jurisdiction to use new flexibilities to cover “in lieu of services.”

WHAT ARE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS?

Social determinants of health are the conditions and environments where people live, grow, work and age that impact health outcomes. These conditions are shaped by racism, economic inequities and other systemic biases. Health-related social needs, on the other hand, refer to social and economic needs that impact someone’s ability to stay healthy. These could include housing instability, food insecurity, lack of gainful employment and lack of transportation. Both social determinants of health and health-related social needs have particular relevance for HIV care and treatment. People with HIV are far more likely to experience housing insecurity, employment insecurity and other factors that impact their ability to access care and services.



WHAT POLICIES CAN EXPAND MEDICAID'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS?

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has published guidance encouraging states to increase Medicaid coverage of health-related social needs, highlighting two options in particular. The first option is through an 1115 waiver — a demonstration project that state Medicaid agencies can apply for that allows states to waive certain federal Medicaid rules to test out new ways of paying for or delivering care. States can use 1115 waivers to cover health-related social needs that have not typically been covered by Medicaid, including housing support, food and nutrition access, and other community supports. The second option applies to Medicaid managed care plans. It allows them to use what's called "in lieu of services" authority, which allows Medicaid managed care plans to provide alternative services that address health-related social needs, such as housing instability and food insecurity. The in lieu of services option does not allow for the same expansion of benefits as an 1115 waiver; however, unlike a waiver, states do not have to apply for Medicaid managed care plans to use in lieu of services authority. While these flexibilities are not limited to people with any one condition, they may be particularly helpful to people with HIV. Providers and advocates should describe how people with HIV could benefit from these provisions and underscore the need to include HIV in 1115 waiver applications and in lieu of services expansion.

Where Can I Learn More?

The following organizations and resources provide useful information on Medicaid and HIV:

- KFF, Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver Watch: A Closer Look at Recent Approvals to Address Health-Related Social Needs (March 2024)
- CMS, Coverage of Services and Supports to Address Health-Related Social Needs in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program & accompanying Table (November 2023)
- Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, Summary of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Health-Related Social Needs Medicaid and CHIP Coverage Guidance (November 2023)
- Center for Health Care Strategies, Association of Community Health Plans, Financing Approaches to Address Social Determinants of Health Via Medicaid Managed Care: A 12-State Review
- Center for Health Care Strategies, Testing One, Two, Three: CMS's New Demonstration Opportunity to Address Health-Related Social Needs (December 2022)