

Comments needed on spending plan by July 6th

As you may know, the American Rescue Plan of 2021 (ARP) provides a temporary 10% increase to the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for certain Medicaid expenditures for home and community-based services (HCBS). The funding must be used to enhance, expand, or strengthen HCBS beyond what is available under the Medicaid program as of April 1, 2021.

Throughout the pandemic, the Department of Human Services' (DHS) continued to hear directly from stakeholders about the devastating impact COVID-19 has had on HCBS and the individuals who rely on those services. Stakeholder insight has been essential to our pandemic response and the provision of services. As a continuation of those conversations, we would like to hear from you about Pennsylvania's plan to use the increased FMAP.

On Monday, June 14, DHS submitted a preliminary spending plan to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) that serves as a foundation for Pennsylvania's planning efforts by outlining our principles and overarching priorities. The preliminary plan encompasses many of the stakeholder recommendations that have been made to date. The overarching priorities include:

1. Increasing access to HCBS;
2. Enhancing HCBS provider payment rates and benefits;
3. Protecting the health and well-being of direct care workers and direct support professionals through the provision of supplies and equipment;
4. Recruitment and retention efforts to support the workforce;
5. Supporting caregivers;
6. Assistive technology and other supports to improve functional capabilities of persons with disabilities;
7. Supporting the transition of individuals to community-based living arrangements;
8. Investing in activities to address Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder treatment and recovery needs of Medicaid beneficiaries; and,
9. Building HCBS capacity and rebalancing Long-term Services and Supports.

With these priorities in mind, we hope to hear more from stakeholders about Pennsylvania's efforts as we continue to flesh out the details of our plan to strengthen, enhance and expand HCBS. Comments must be submitted by close of business on July 6.

View Pennsylvania's preliminary spending plan at <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/coronavirus/Pages/American-Rescue-Plan-HCBS-Public-Comment.aspx>.

Your comments can be submitted via email to, RA-secretaryoffice@pa.gov. Additionally, a live virtual public comment session will take place on Wednesday, June 30 at 10 a.m. for those who are unable or prefer not to submit written feedback. More information about how to RSVP for this session will be available soon.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and for all you do to serve Pennsylvanians.