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Trump Administration Approves 34th State Request for Medicaid Emergency Waivers

Expeditious wavier approvals ensure that CMS provides states with maximum flexibility needed to care for Medicaid beneficiaries during coronavirus public health emergency

Under President Trump's leadership, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved its 34th state Medicaid waiver request under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act. Granting these waivers is made possible by the President's national emergency declaration to ensure that CMS is providing state partners with the maximum flexibility needed to care for Medicaid beneficiaries during the coronavirus public health emergency.

These Medicaid 1135 waiver approvals were approved in record time, all within days of the states' submission of requests and had an average approval time of less than six days. Other types of Medicaid waivers can require months of negotiation, but in light of the urgent and evolving needs of states during COVID-19 CMS developed a streamlined template for facilitate expedited application and approval of Medicaid 1135 waivers. CMS will continue to work with additional states that submit requests to promptly review and approve their applications.

These approvals provide states new flexibilities to focus their resources to provide the best possible care for their Medicaid beneficiaries in response to the coronavirus outbreak. In addition to the Section Medicaid 1135 waiver approvals, CMS has also approved eight state requests to invoke emergency flexibilities in their programs that care for the elderly and people with disabilities in their homes and communities. These approvals give states a range of flexibilities including the ability to enroll out-of-state or new providers more quickly, temporarily

delay Medicaid hearings to focus resources, and temporarily suspend prior authorization requirements.

“Thanks to the decisive leadership of President Trump during this emergency, CMS is responding to urgent requests from governors for regulatory relief to more quickly and effectively care for their most vulnerable citizens” said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. “These waivers allow states to make extraordinary adjustments to their Medicaid programs to meet the unprecedented demands of this emergency.”

CMS will continue to expeditiously review and approve, as appropriate, all Section 1135 waivers and other requests that the agency receives in continuation of the Trump Administration’s commitment to the coronavirus response that is locally executed, state managed and federally supported. The most recent addition of Medicaid 1135 state approvals includes New York, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Massachusetts, Maryland, Connecticut, Delaware, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wyoming. They join the following states with already-approved 1135 approval letters: Iowa, Indiana, Rhode Island, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Oregon, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Alabama, California, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New Jersey, Arizona, Virginia, North Carolina, Mississippi Louisiana, Illinois, Washington and Florida. All Section 1135 approval letters will be posted [here](#) as they are issued.

CMS provides guidance to states on how to apply for Section 1135 waivers through the Medicaid Disaster Response Tool Kit, which can be found [here](#). To further the agency’s efforts, CMS has developed [checklists and tools](#) to expedite COVID-19 virus requests and approvals for waivers and other commonly requested flexibilities during the current public health emergency. Home and community based program resources can be found [here](#).

These waivers, and earlier CMS actions in response to coronavirus, are part of the ongoing White House Coronavirus Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the task force is doing in response to coronavirus, visit www.coronavirus.gov. For a complete and updated list of CMS actions, and other information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#). Additionally, CMS has launched a dedicated, [Medicaid.gov, COVID-19 resource page](#) that will be continually updated with relevant information.

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