



August 22, 2018

Better Health Care In Illinois

In Illinois, Medicaid provides health care insurance for 3.1 million people, or 24% of Illinoisans. Of these, 1.4 million are children, 247,000 are adults with disabilities, 208,000 are seniors, 590,000 are other adults, and 630,000 are low-income single adults that became eligible for Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

We want to make sure that Medicaid really helps to improve the health of people who have it. Health is more than just the absence of disease, but is a state of well-being in physical and mental health. The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) administers our Medicaid program in Illinois. Medicaid is a nationwide program jointly funded by the federal government and the states. Total federal and state Medicaid spending for Illinois during 2016 amounted to about \$19.3 billion. The federal government paid 59.8 percent of these costs, while the state paid the remaining 40.2 percent. Medicaid accounted for 27.1 percent of Illinois' budget in 2015. Medicaid eligibility, benefits, and administration are managed by the states within federal guidelines.

In May of this year, Illinois received approval for its application to the federal government for an "1115 waiver", following an almost 2 year application process. What does this mean?

An "1115 waiver" is a contract between the federal and state governments that "waives" federal Medicaid requirements and gives the state government approval to experiment, pilot, or demonstrate projects. The purpose of these demonstrations is to evaluate policy approaches such as providing services not typically covered by Medicaid or creating innovative service delivery systems that improve care, increase efficiency, and reduce costs.

So, this means that Illinois will have a chance to be innovate and creative to better meet the health care needs of people who have Medicaid insurance. What is being planned?

According to the department, some pilots will be statewide while others will be limited in geographic scope and the numbers of participants. They include residential and inpatient treatment for individuals with substance use disorder, crisis intervention services for individuals experiencing a psychiatric crisis, and intensive in-home services to stabilize behaviors that may lead to crisis.

According to HFS, the ten 1115 waiver pilots are:

- Residential and Inpatient Treatment for Individuals with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Pilot
- Clinically Managed Withdrawal Management Services Pilot
- SUD Case Management Pilot
- Peer Recovery Support Services Pilot
- Crisis Intervention Services Pilot

- Evidence-based Home Visiting Services Pilot
- Assistance in Community Integration Services Pilot
- Supported Employment Services Pilot
- Intensive In-Home Services Pilot
- Respite Services Pilot

The related state plan amendments are: Integrated physical and behavioral health homes, crisis stabilization and mobile crisis response, medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for people suffering from addiction to heroin and other opiates, and Uniform Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) and Adult Needs and Strengths Assessment (ANSA).

One innovation will be to create integrated health homes for patients with very serious medical and behavioral/mental health conditions. Coordinating care and being creative to meet their needs will be a key feature. Working through Medicaid managed care organizations, it is hoped that factors that really affect a person's health will be addressed – examples are a lack of housing, or a lack of support when people are struggling to be free of heroin or other drugs. For more information, see: <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs> and click on *1115 Waiver* on the lower left side of the home page.

I have talked at length with HFS Director Patricia Bellock (who used to be my colleague in the House) and her staff, and I look forward to continuing to work with them to make sure that these changes really lead to better health and well-being for people who have Medicaid on the West Side and throughout Illinois.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'La Shawn K. Ford', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District