



## MEDICAID WAIVER PROGRAMS

### PART I – HOME-AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES MEDICAID WAIVERS FOR CHILDREN

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Colorado currently administers 11 Home- and Community-Based Services Medicaid (HCBS) Waivers. This issue brief discusses the five waivers available to children. An issue brief entitled *Medicaid Waiver Programs Part II – Home- and Community-Based Services Medicaid Waivers for Adults* discusses the six waivers available to adults.

#### Background

Medicaid, a joint federal and state public health insurance program, provides health insurance coverage to low-income individuals who meet income and other eligibility requirements. Each state administers its own Medicaid program, and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) monitors state programs and sets quality, funding, benefit, and eligibility standards. Colorado's Medicaid program is administered by the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF).

Although federal law provides certain eligibility criteria and outlines minimum benefits, states have flexibility in the design and implementation of their Medicaid programs. States may extend Medicaid eligibility to additional persons with incomes above the income eligibility requirement, or provide coverage to optional groups. In addition to expanding the categories of individuals served under Medicaid, states can provide additional nonmandated benefits through the implementation of a waiver. A Medicaid waiver

is a detailed agreement between CMS and a state that allows the state to expand Medicaid coverage by exempting the state from specific provisions of the federal Medicaid law.

#### Home- and Community-Based Services Medicaid Waivers for Children

HCBS waivers for children allow states to provide home- and community-based care to children who would otherwise be institutionalized. A waiver applicant, i.e., the child, must meet financial, medical, and program targeting criteria to access services under a waiver. For FY 2015-16, an applicant's income must be less than \$2,199 per month and countable resources less than \$2,000. Parental income is not considered toward a child's eligibility. Applicants must also be at risk of placement in a nursing facility, hospital, or an Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID).<sup>1</sup>

Services offered through a waiver are provided by certified Medicaid providers or by a Medicaid contracted managed care organization. Individualized service plans are created for all clients, and the cost of the services cannot be more than the cost of placement in a nursing facility, hospital, or ICF/IID. Additionally, children receiving services under a waiver are eligible for all basic

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<sup>1</sup>An ICF/IID is a residential institution primarily for the diagnosis, treatment, or rehabilitation of an intellectually disabled person.

Medicaid covered services, except nursing facility and long-term hospital care.

Colorado currently administers five HCBS waivers for children. HCPF administers four of the waiver programs:

- Children's HCBS Waiver;
- Children's Extensive Support Waiver;
- HCBS Children with Autism Waiver; and
- Children with Life-Limiting Illness Waiver.

The Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the Children's Habilitation Residential Program Waiver.

**Children's HCBS Waiver.** This waiver provides benefits for disabled children from birth through age 17 who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid due to excess parental income or resources. Benefits provided include case management and in-home support services. As of August 2015, 1,184 children receive services under this waiver. Applications may be submitted to county departments of human services, single entry point agencies (SEP),<sup>2</sup> community centered boards (CCB),<sup>3</sup> or private case management agencies. Case managers, family members, and primary care physicians determine the client's needs. An approved case management agency or CCB provides case management.

**Children's Extensive Support Services Waiver.** This waiver provides benefits for children from birth through age 17 with intensive behavioral or medical needs. Benefits provided include specialized medical equipment and supplies, community connection services, home modifications, personal assistance, and professional services. As of August 2015, 1,549 children are receiving services under this waiver, with a waiting list of 103 children.

<sup>2</sup>SEPs provide case management, care planning, and make referrals to other resources for elderly, blind, and disabled persons, persons living with AIDS, mental illness, brain injury, or spinal cord injury, children with a life-limiting illness, and children with a physical disability.

<sup>3</sup>CCBs are private nonprofit organizations designated as the single entry point into Colorado's long-term service and support system for persons with developmental disabilities.

Applications may be submitted to a CCB. Clients, case managers, and family members determine the client's needs, and a CCB provides case management.

**Children With Autism Waiver.** This waiver provides behavioral therapies for children from birth through age five who have a medical diagnosis of autism, and who are most in need due to the severity of their disability. As of June 2015, 75 children are being served under the waiver. There is a waiting list of over 300 children. Applications may be submitted to a CCB. Case managers and family members determine the client's needs, and the CCB provides case management. The eligibility age for this waiver was expected to increase in FY 2015-16 as a result of House Bill 15-1186; however, the provisions of the bill will not be implemented since CMS did not approve the expansion.

**Children with a Life-Limiting Illness Waiver.** This waiver provides access to Medicaid services in the home for children from birth through age 18 with life-limiting illnesses. Benefits provided include expressive therapies, palliative and supportive care, and respite care. The family is permitted to seek curative treatment while the child is receiving palliative or hospice care. As of August 2015, 158 children are being served under this waiver. Applications may be submitted to a SEP. Family members determine the needs of the client, and a SEP provides case management.

**Children's Habilitation Residential Program Waiver.** This waiver provides residential services for children and youth between birth and 20 years old who are in foster care and who are at risk of institutionalization in an ICF/IID. The waiver is designed to assist children and youth with acquiring, retaining, and improving self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills. The waiver serves between 160 to 200 children. County departments of human services determine eligibility, select the service providers, and provide case management.