

RESPONSES TO COVID-19: AGENCY OVERVIEWS, UPDATES, AND CHANGES IN SERVICE

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Sue O'Connell
Legislative Research Analyst

COVID-19: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTIVES, WAIVERS, AND FEDERAL FUNDING

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has received several waivers and amendments to its public assistance programs since the COVID-19 public health emergency was declared. Some of the changes help Montanans whose financial situations have changed, while others revamp the delivery of health care services. Governor Bullock also has issued executive directives related to DPHHS programs and to health care services, while Congress has appropriated funds for many health and human services programs.

The graphic below illustrates some of the actions taken in response to the coronavirus situation. The table on the following pages provides more specific details about the changes and funding, including links to relevant materials.

Governor's Directives/Actions



3/28: Suspension of Medicaid premiums and CHIP copays

3/31: Loans to health care facilities



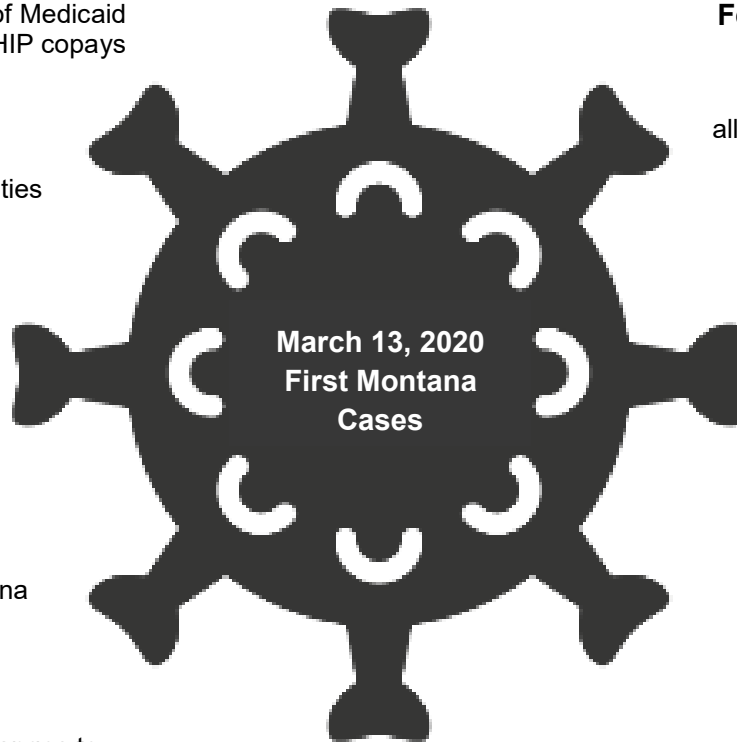
4/1: Requirements for child care providers



4/1: Medical marijuana changes



March and April: Changes to telemedicine and health care provider licensing requirements



Federal Waivers and Grants

3/30: Medicaid 1135 waiver allows greater flexibility in health care response



March and April: Food program waivers allow enrollment, benefit, and service changes



4/30: HCBS waiver recognizes altered landscape of providing personal services



Federal Funding

Special payments for aging services, food programs, child care providers, and health care providers



Governor's Directives/ Actions	Topic Area	Details
March 28, 2020	<u>Medicaid and CHIP</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates copayments for Healthy Montana Kids services • Continues Medicaid coverage for people who don't pay their premiums; required to obtain 6.2% federal matching rate increase
March 31, 2020	<u>Health Care Facilities</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes restrictions on using Montana Facility Finance Authority loans for operating expenses such as supplies and salaries
April 1, 2020	<u>Child Care Providers</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designates child care an essential business that may remain open if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ care is provided in stable groups of 10 or fewer children ○ classroom space isn't shared among groups of children ○ priority is given to children of parents working essential jobs ○ providers take appropriate COVID-19 safety precautions • Requires facilities to close if they can't comply with guidelines • Suspends rules for staffing ratios and maximum group sizes
April 1, 2020	<u>Medical Marijuana Program</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifts daily marijuana purchase limit so cardholders can buy the maximum monthly amount at one visit • Suspends requirements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ physician recertification when cards expire ○ in-person physician visit to first certify a debilitating condition ○ inspection/fingerprint background checks for license renewal • Halts complaint-instigated inspections except for complaints involving an immediate impact on public health and safety • Suspends issuance of new provider licenses and canopy tiers • Allows delivery of marijuana items to cardholders
March and April 2020	<u>Health Care Providers</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>March 20 directive</u> lifts some limits on the use of telemedicine • <u>April 21 directive</u> expands use of telemedicine and offers guidance on insurance coverage of telemedicine services • <u>April 21 directive</u> eases licensure requirements for out-of-state and retired health care providers
Federal Waivers/ Amendments	Topic Area	Details
April 1, 2020	<u>Medicaid 1135 Waiver</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows quicker enrollment of Medicaid providers without some of the required screening • Eliminates some prior authorizations • Suspends level of care assessments for nursing home admissions • Reimburses services in settings not typically covered by Medicaid • Retroactively effective to March 1
March and April 2020	<u>Food Program Waivers</u>	<p>Numerous SNAP, WIC, and Child Nutrition Program waivers allow Montana to, among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay the maximum monthly SNAP benefit to all families in April and May, even if they didn't previously qualify for that amount • extend SNAP certification for an additional 6 months to families whose eligibility expired in March, April, or May • provide school lunches at sites other than schools • suspend collection of SNAP overpayments through May 31 • suspend requirements that WIC participants apply in person and provide medical documentation of the need for special foods • pay for substitute food items in the WIC program

Federal Waivers/ Amendments	Topic Area	Details
April 30, 2020	Appendix K -- HCBS Waiver Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows waiver participants to keep their waiver slots if they don't use services during the public health emergency • Allows some services to be provided in the home or another setting rather than a congregate setting • Permits payment for some services provided by a family caregiver • Modifies the evaluation and re-evaluation processes • Applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Big Sky Waiver for elderly and physically disabled people ○ the 0208 waiver for people with developmental disabilities ○ the Severe Disabling Mental Illness waiver • Retroactive to Jan. 27, 2020, and effective through July 27, 2020
Federal Funding Allocations to MT		Details
Senior and Long-Term Care Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>\$5.525 million</u> in CARES Act* funding as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$1 million for supportive services that allow independent living ○ \$2.4 million for home-delivered meals ○ \$500,000 for caregiver support ○ \$100,000 for ombudsman activities ○ \$583,420 for tribal programs ○ \$941,295 for independent living center programs • \$1.2 million in FFCRA** funds for <u>congregate and home meals</u> • \$304,700 in FFCRA funds for <u>tribal food programs</u>
Food Assistance Programs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.2 million in FFCRA funds for <u>The Emergency Food Assistance Program</u>, which distributes items to food banks and other centers • <u>Authorization</u> for the Fort Peck Tribes and Chippewa Cree Tribe to provide or deliver emergency food packages to households
Child Care Providers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>\$10.1 million</u> in CARES Act funding to assist with COVID-19 impacts
Health Care Facilities and Providers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>\$199.5 million</u> in CARES Act funding for rural acute care hospitals, critical access hospitals, rural health clinics, and community health centers located in rural areas • <u>\$111.5 million</u> in CARES Act funding for health care providers based on their total share of Medicare fee-for-service reimbursements in 2019 (1,469 eligible providers) • <u>\$111.48 million</u> in CARES act funding to eligible health care systems; amount allocated per congressional district (1,464 eligible payees) • <u>\$9.2 million</u> in CARES Act funding to 14 community health centers to support their COVID-19 capacity and response • <u>\$4 million</u> in CARES Act funding to Montana State University for assisting the small rural hospitals response to COVID-19 • <u>\$810,430</u> from the first federal coronavirus bill (Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act) to assist community health centers in preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19

* CARES Act = Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, the third coronavirus bill passed by Congress

** FFCRA = Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the second coronavirus bill passed by Congress