



# FAMILY VOICES<sup>®</sup>

Washington DC Update  
May 16, 2018

♥♥♥ Mother's Day kicked off **National Women's Health Week** -- a reminder for women to make their health a priority and build positive health habits for life.

Learn what [steps you can take for good health](#), no matter your age. ♥♥♥

## GREETINGS FROM WASHINGTON!

This week the House of Representatives will be considering the "Farm Bill," which includes additional work requirements and other eligibility changes for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps) that could reduce the number of people receiving assistance. ♥ A House committee will be considering numerous bills to address the opioid epidemic. ♥ Last week, the administration announced (1) a plan intended to reduce the price of prescription drugs and (2) an initiative to improve health care for rural Americans. ♥ Comments on the proposed regulation on state monitoring of Medicaid access to care are due on May 22.

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT about ACA-plan enrollment for consumers affected by 2017 hurricane activity – Deadline May 24.** Please see the end of this Update for information about a new Special Enrollment Period for certain consumers.

## UPCOMING WEBINARS AND CALLS

(All topics; in chronological order, by first webinar in a series where applicable.)

### **NEW Communications Solutions to Achieving Health Equity with Populations Living with Disabilities**

**Wednesday, May 16, 2:00-3:00 ET**

*Mountain States Regional Health Equity*

### **Webinar Series for Youth Self-Advocates: Leadership is a Journey**

*Sponsored by NCFPP, Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, KASA, and Youth MOVE*

#### **What is My Culture? What are My Values?**

*Part One: Culture and Values Reflection*

*Wednesday, May 2 (completed)*

#### **Part Two: The Role of Youth Leadership within Health Equity Work**

**Wednesday, May 16, 6:00-6:30 pm ET**

#### **Cultural Perspectives on Self-Care in Leadership**

**Wednesday, May 30, 6:00-6:30 pm ET, *Cultural Perspectives on Self-Care in Leadership***

***Knowing Yourself as a Change Agent Parts 1 & 2 (completed)***

*Find recordings for completed webinars [here](#).*

**[Measure What Matters: Advancing Multidisciplinary Care Coordination in Primary and Subspecialty Care Settings](#)**

Part 2: **Thursday, May 17, 12:00-12:45 ET** ([Register Here](#))

Part 1: *Thursday, May 10, 12:00-12:45 ET (completed)*

*National Center for Medical Home Implementation and the National Center for Care Coordination Technical Assistance*

This 2-part webinar series presents real-world experiences from diverse health care providers with the common goal of capturing the value of care coordination using the Care Coordination Measurement Tool ([CCMT](#)) and accompanying [adaptation guide](#).

**[NEW TRICARE Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services](#)**

**Thursday, May 17, 1:00-2:00 ET**

*Military OneSource*

**[NEW Using Value-Based Payment to Incentivize Maternal and Infant Health Care Delivery Models](#)**

**Thursday, May 17, 2:00-3:30 ET**

*CMS Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program (IAP) Maternal and Infant Health Initiative (MIHI) Value-Based Payment (VBP) team*

**[NEW What Advocates Need to Know About Changes to the Essential Health Benefit Standards](#)**

**Tuesday, May 22, 2:00-3:00 ET**

*National Health Law Program*

**[NEW The Power of Positive Reinforcement: Strategies for Teaching Young Children](#)**

**Wednesday, May 23, 12:00-1:00 ET**

*Vermont Family Network*

**[NEW Individuals with Disabilities & Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs, Pre/Post Disaster](#)**

**Wednesday, May 23, 2018, 1:00-2:00 ET**

*Family Liaisons of the Friends of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities*

**[NEW Introducing the Building Community Resilience's Policy & Advocacy Guide](#)**

**Wednesday, May 23, 1:00-2:30 ET**

*Building Community Resilience (BCR) Collaborative ([go.qwu.edu/bcr](http://go.qwu.edu/bcr)), Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health*

**[NEW ABLÉ Program Spotlight: National ABLÉ Alliance](#)**

**Thursday, May 24, 2:00-3:00 ET**

*ABLE National Resource Center*

**[Educational Advocacy after Brain Surgery](#)**

**Wednesday, May 30, 3:00 ET**

*Family Voices of California*

## **NEW Developmental Screenings in Medicaid and CHIP: Federal Progress, State Opportunities**

**Thursday, May 31, 3:00 ET**

*Georgetown Center on Children and Families*

## **Got Transition Webinar Series -- Health Care Transition for Title V Care Coordinators**

*Got Transition/Center for Health Care Transition Improvement*

- **Thursday, May 31st, 3:00-4:00 ET:** Integration into Adult Care
- **Thursday, June 28th, 3:00-4:00 ET:** Youth, Young Adult, & Parent Engagement
- *Thursday, April 26th, 3:00-4:00 ET: Transfer to Adult Care (already took place)*

## **NEW A Guided Tour of the National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making (NRC-SDM) Website**

**Monday, June 4, 3:00-4:00 ET**

*Family Voices*

## **CONGRESS**

### **House to Vote On Farm Bill that Would Change Eligibility Requirements for Food Stamps (SNAP)**

On Wednesday, the House is expected to vote on the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 ([H.R. 2](#)), referred to as the "Farm Bill." Among many other programs, this legislation will impact the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps. The bill would expand work requirements and make other SNAP eligibility changes expected to jeopardize benefits for up to 2 million current recipients. As a result, most Democrats are expected to oppose the bill. Many conservative Republicans are also expected to oppose the bill because they think it provides overly generous subsidies to large agricultural enterprises. It is not clear that there will be support for the bill in the Senate. See [Ryan, GOP Scramble to Win Support for Controversial Farm Bill](#) (The Hill, 5/13/18).

### **Opioid-Related Legislation**

The House Energy and Commerce Committee is scheduled to take up (mark up) on May 9 [about 30 bills](#) to address the opioid crisis. Most are bipartisan, and they include proposals to improve access to medication-assisted treatment, encourage people to enter the behavioral health field, and expand research into opioid alternatives. As reported in the [April 26 Update](#), the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) approved opioid legislation last month.

## **MEDICAID NEWS, INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

[Medicaid Benefits for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) (blog post on how Medicaid's pediatric benefit, EPSDT, helps children with autism spectrum disorders get the services they need; Georgetown Center on Children and Families, 5/7/18)

### **WORTH REPEATING: Medicaid Section 1115 Waivers – Information and Public Input**

As addressed in recent Updates, a number of states have been asking the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for Medicaid waivers under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act. These waivers can be used to impose work requirements and make other changes to Medicaid policies.

In some states, legislatures are passing laws to require their state submit a waiver application. In such cases, advocates can try to influence the terms of that legislation.

As it is developing its waiver application, a **state must provide an opportunity for public comment** and must provide a website to accept these comments. See [Review and Approval Process Rule for Section 1115 Medicaid and CHIP Demonstration Waivers](#) (Kaiser Family Foundation, March 2012).

In addition, there is a **public comment period at the federal level** before a waiver is approved. Once a waiver is approved, the public can try to work with the state to develop the implementation details.

- [Medicaid.gov Sec. 1115 waiver webpage](#) (CMS)
- [Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver Tracker](#) (Kaiser Family Foundation)
- [Table on waiver proposals](#) National Academy for State Health Policy)
- [Learn the Latest about State Efforts to Implement Medicaid Work Requirements](#) (National Academy for State Health Policy)

## ACA NEWS, INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

\*\*\* Please see the end of this Update for an IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT about ACA-plan enrollment for consumers affected by 2017 hurricane activity. Deadline: May 24. \*\*\*

### **New rules for state selection of benchmark plans to determine Essential Health Benefits**

In April, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the final 2019 “Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters” (NBPP), which governs insurance offered in the individual and small group markets pursuant to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The 2019 NBPP alters the way that states can establish their benchmark plans for 2020 and beyond, which will allow states to establish less generous benefits packages. Advocates at the state level have the opportunity to influence their states’ decisions about the benchmark plans, and thus the benefits, required to be covered in their states. States that want to update their EHB benchmark for plans sold in 2020 must submit their selection to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by **July 2, 2018**, and they must post a notice for public comment on a relevant state website. The National Health Law Program recently released a [Step-by-Step Guide to Updating States' Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plans](#) to help state advocates to inform the state about their needs and concerns. See also [Overview of Changes to the Essential Health Benefits Standards in NBPP 2019](#) (National Health Law Program, 4/23/18) and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) [summary of relevant changes](#) made by the NBPP and the new guidance expanding the hardship exemption from the requirement to have coverage or pay a penalty.

## TRICARE

[TRICARE Provider Types: Understanding Your Options](#) (5/9/18)

**WORTH REPEATING:** Resources about TRICARE mental health services can be found in the TRICARE Benefits Updates [Assess Your Mental Wellness During Mental Health Awareness Month](#) and [Register for TRICARE Webinar on Mental Health Care Services](#), which takes place on Thursday, **May 17, 1:00-2:00 ET.**

## OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION

### Administration Unveils Plan to Reduce Costs of Rx Drugs

On May 11, the administration released a plan intended to lower prescription drug prices and reduce out-of-pocket medication costs for consumers. The "[American Patients First](#)" plan focuses primarily on changes to methodologies for reimbursement and rebates in Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal programs. The plan also includes some ideas to address costs to consumers at large, such as facilitating the use of generic drugs, regulation of pharmacy benefit managers, and requiring greater price transparency by, for example, requiring drug advertising to include prices. The plan document also poses numerous questions about other possible ways to address prescription drug prices in the future. See [Trump Rolls Out Drug Price Plan But It's Still a Work in Progress](#) (Politico, 5/11/18); [Trump Promises to "Derail The Gravy Train" and Lower Drug Prices in "American Patients First" Plan](#) (Washington Post, 5/11/18).

### CMS Announces Rural Health Strategy

On May 8, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) [announced](#) its [Rural Health Strategy](#), which is intended to provide a "proactive approach on healthcare issues to ensure that the nearly one in five individuals who live in rural America have access to high quality, affordable healthcare."

As detailed in a [CMS Fact Sheet](#), the strategy focuses on five objectives:

- Apply a rural lens to CMS programs and policies
- Improve access to care through provider engagement and support
- Advance telehealth and telemedicine
- Empower patients in rural communities to make decisions about their healthcare
- Leverage partnerships to achieve the goals of the CMS Rural Health Strategy

### WORTH REPEATING: NIH *All of Us* Research Initiative

As announced in a [May 1 press release](#), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has opened national public enrollment in its [All of Us Research Program](#), which is intended to advance "precision medicine" – personalized health prevention and medical treatment. They are hoping to enroll at least one million people in a one-year "beta" test in preparation for the final launch of this research project. Anyone age 18 or older, regardless of health status, can enroll. The NIH intends to oversample communities that have been underrepresented. Participants will share (secured) information about their health over time, as explained on the [project website](#).

## OTHER RESOURCES

### Family Engagement

- [Family Engagement: Identifying the Right Parent Partners for Improvement Work](#) – from the National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ)
- [Archived Webinar: Rolling Up Our Sleeves: How to Plan and Implement Quality Improvement Activities Focused on Family Engagement](#) – from the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

## Children's Mental Health

In conjunction with [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day](#) on May 10, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have publicized several resources:

- [Resources for Child Trauma Informed Care](#), SAMHSA
- [Improving Life Outcomes for Children with History of Mental Health Challenges and Trauma](#), SAMHSA
- [Helping Children and Youth Who Have Traumatic Experiences](#) (fact sheet), SAMHSA
- [Improving Access to Children's Mental Health Care](#), CDC
- [Your Child Is At Risk for Mental Health Issues after a Disaster](#), CDC

## Autism Awareness

April was Autism Awareness Month. At the end of the month, the Administration for Community Living issued this list of resources: [Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month – Highlights and Resources](#).

## Health and Safety in Group Homes

[Joint Report: Ensuring Beneficiary Health and Safety in Group Homes through State Implementation of Comprehensive Compliance Oversight](#)

This joint report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (OIG); Administration for Community Living (ACL); and Office for Civil Rights (OCR) provides suggested model practices to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and states for comprehensive compliance oversight of group homes to help ensure better health and safety outcomes. In addition, the Joint Report provides suggestions for how CMS can assist States when serious health and safety issues arise that require immediate attention.

## Slides on Basic Information about SSI

These [slides](#) and brief [webinar](#) introduce the SSI program -- who is eligible, how eligibility is determined, and SSI's relationship with other means-tested benefits programs.

## [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) –

From the U.S. Department of Education

[Beyond Guardianship: Toward Alternatives That Promote Greater Self-Determination](#) (PDF) – from the National Council on Disability

## **YOUR INPUT SOUGHT**

[Listed in order of due date.]

## Proposed Regulation on State Monitoring of Medicaid Access to Care

### **Comments due May 22**

As reported in the [March 29 Update](#), and outlined in the press release [CMS Proposes Regulation to Alleviate State Burden](#), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a [proposed rule](#) that would *relax* state requirements to ensure that Medicaid beneficiaries have “equal access” to

health care – that is, access to care on par with the general population – in states where a significant percentage of Medicaid beneficiaries are enrolled in managed care plans. (For detailed background information on equal access, see [this post from the Health Affairs blog.](#))

Comments on the proposed rule are due on May 22, and a number of patient advocacy groups are developing comments. For more information on current regulations regarding Medicaid access to care, click [here](#). The proposed rule can be found, and comments can be submitted, [here](#).

## **Transparency of Hospital Charges to Prevent “Surprise Medical Bills”**

### **Comments due June 25**

In a [proposed rule](#) on Medicare hospital payments, CMS included a request for public comments “regarding barriers preventing providers from informing patients of their out of pocket costs; what changes are needed to support greater transparency around patient obligations for their out of pocket costs; what can be done to better inform patients of these obligations; and what role providers should play in this initiative.” See this CMS [fact sheet](#). The precise questions on which comments are sought can be found [here](#). For more details, see the [April 26 Washington Update](#). Comments can be submitted [here](#).

## **OF POSSIBLE INTEREST**

### **“Man with Golden Arm” Saves Millions of Infants Over 60 Years**

[Final donation for man whose blood helped save 2.4 million babies](#) (Sydney Morning Herald, 5/11/18)

Health policy experts at [The Urban Institute](#) (think tank) have developed a proposal for ensuring access to health insurance: [The Healthy America Program: Building on the Best of Medicare and the Affordable Care Act](#), The Urban Institute, May 14, 2018

## **SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR CERTAIN HURRICANE-AFFECTED CONSUMERS**

### **Update on Special Enrollment Period Available for Individuals Affected by 2017 Hurricanes and Hurricane-Related Weather Events**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has identified consumers who were erroneously denied access to an Exceptional Circumstances Special Enrollment Period (SEP) and other flexibilities that were available for consumers affected by hurricanes and hurricane-related weather events that occurred in 2017, pursuant to [Sept. 2017 guidance](#). Now CMS is notifying these consumers of eligibility for another SEP due to the error or misrepresentation of the Marketplace. **These consumers will be able to select a 2018 Marketplace plan or make changes to their existing 2018 plan by May 24, 2018.** Coverage accessed under this SEP will begin June 1st or July 1st, depending on the date the consumer selects their plan. Consumers wishing to access coverage prior to June 1st must file an appeal within 90 days of the date of SEP Eligibility Notice.

### **Who is Eligible?**

**Individuals who attested to residing in an area affected by a 2017 hurricane or hurricane related event who submitted an application within the last two weeks of December, but were not determined eligible for an SEP at that time, will be eligible for this new SEP. Per the September 28,**

2017, guidance, an area is considered affected if it is a county meeting the level of “individual assistance” or “public assistance” by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**What Documentation is Needed?**

CMS has identified the population eligible for this SEP within Marketplace systems so that they can be easily identified by the Marketplace Call Center representatives and other CMS officials. **Anyone eligible for this SEP will receive a hard copy notice of this SEP in the mail.** CMS will not require the submission of any documentation to prove eligibility for this SEP.

**Steps to Helping a Consumer Access This SEP:**

Eligible consumers can access this SEP directly through HealthCare.gov or through the Marketplace Call Center.

To pick a plan through HealthCare.gov, consumers should:

1. Log into their Marketplace account.
2. Select “Start a new application or update an existing one.”
3. Click on their name in the top right of the screen and choose “My applications & coverage.”
4. Select your current application. You’ll see steps to continue to enrollment for anyone who was eligible to buy a 2018 Marketplace plan.

**Note:** Consumers will not be able to access this SEP through HealthCare.gov if they make changes to their online application. If a consumer has had changes to their application since they last applied, like changes to household income or family size, they should call the Marketplace Call Center at 1-800-318-2596 to update their information and enroll.

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We would love to hear any suggestions you might have about how to make the Update more useful to you. Does it provide the right amount of information? What parts are helpful and not so helpful? Please let us know!

And, as always, please feel free to contact us with any questions. Comments and questions can be directed to [jguerney@familyvoices.org](mailto:jguerney@familyvoices.org).

Yours truly,  
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Director of Public Policy  
Family Voices

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number U40MC00149. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by, HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.