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## ***COVID-19 Long Term Care Stabilization Program*** ***Version 4– 11/16/20***

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Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and a recent rise in COVID-19 cases in New Hampshire, Medicaid providers that provide long term services in facility-based settings as well as in the home and community are experiencing increased challenges in retaining their frontline workforce, threatening critical staffing levels needed to provide continuity of long term supports and services to individuals in these programs. Governor Sununu has reactivated the COVID-19 Long-Term Care Stabilization Program to help stabilize frontline work of certain Medicaid providers that is not able to be conducted remotely. The extended program includes previously approved providers that support aging seniors and people with developmental disabilities, as well as individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders, youth residential treatment providers, and developmental disability service providers who provide residential or community/home-based care. The program as reactivated will provide temporary stabilization funding to incentivize frontline workers to remain or rejoin this critical workforce during the COVID-19 Emergency. The program will help ensure that these critical providers who support some of New Hampshire's most vulnerable persons are able to provide continued services throughout the COVID-19 Emergency.

### **Qualifying Medicaid Providers**

Medicaid providers previously approved for LTCS participation prior to July 30, 2020 that continue to deliver care and other supportive services in a residential, facility or community setting are eligible to continue to participate in this extended program. The program reactivation continues to include providers that support aging adults, people with mental health complexity, individuals with substance use disorder, people with developmental disabilities, and at risk youth are eligible as well as providers who deliver certain frontline services through the developmental services system, those who provide qualifying Choice for Independence waiver services, and nursing facility services. Residential SUD, mental health providers, youth residential treatment providers, and Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) are considered eligible. In addition to Medicaid funded services, the program also continues to be available to frontline workers at the New Hampshire Veterans Home and the John H. Sununu Youth Services Center (SYSC). Hospitals and hospital owned providers are not eligible for this program.

### **Qualifying Frontline Employees**

These funds will be available to individuals that provide Medicaid funded services directly to individuals in residential, home, facility, and community settings as well as other frontline workers who are at a greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 as a result of their employment. To be eligible, the individual must be a frontline worker and be employed by or contracted with a previously approved qualifying Medicaid provider or in the case of Area Agencies, contract with a qualifying Medicaid provider. Emergency Order #31 originally only allowed employees to receive a stipend, but it was modified on May 18, 2020 to include contracted workers of Medicaid providers.

Frontline means work provided by employees or contracted workers that work in direct care, food service, maintenance and services vital to patient care for a Medicaid enrolled provider that are not able to do their work remotely.

Beginning November 16, 2020 through and including December 30, 2020, all executive staff, managerial staff and administrative staff are eligible for the LTCS stipend to the extent and for the hours that they are deployed for the express provision of frontline services if they provide frontline work for a minimum of 7.5 hours for the part time stipend and 30 hours minimum for the full time stipend. Qualified Medicaid providers must document that directors, managers, or administrative staff completed the necessary frontline work to be eligible for the weekly stipend.

For all frontline workers, the qualified Medicaid provider must acknowledge that the employees and contracted workers being put forward for the stipend are required to be in the facility and are not working remotely. Further, the qualified Medicaid provider must acknowledge that 100% of the LTCS Program payment will be paid to qualifying frontline employees and contracted workers. The qualified Medicaid provider cannot retain any portion of the stipend for its own use.

The program does not require that providers document how many hours a week a frontline employee serves a Medicaid beneficiary. If an employee is likely to see a Medicaid beneficiary in any given week of the program (and the employee works on the frontline for a minimum of 7.5 hours for the part time stipend and 30 hours minimum for the full time stipend), the employee is eligible for inclusion in the program by the qualified Medicaid provider.

### **Process for Eligible Providers and Qualifying Frontline Workers to Receive Funds**

Previously approved Medicaid enrolled providers will need to file the same WEEKLY PAYMENT CERTIFICATION and WORKER ROSTER as previously submitted which will need to be filed on a weekly basis in order to trigger the release of stipend payments.

The WEEKLY PAYMENT CERTIFICATION along with WORKER ROSTER is available from the NHES website ([WWW.NHES.NH.GOV](http://WWW.NHES.NH.GOV)) by clicking on 'LONG TERM CARE PAYMENT' and may be submitted weekly via the provided e-mail address. WEEKLY PAYMENT CERTIFICATION forms are required to include all qualifying workers providing qualifying frontline services, both full-time and part-time, for which the provider is seeking the LTCS payment. The provider is able to submit each WEEKLY PAYMENT CERTIFICATION starting on each Sunday and is always certifying as to employment for the prior weekly period Sunday through Saturday. The LTCS Program was created by Emergency Order #31 issued by Governor Sununu on April 16<sup>th</sup>. The LTCS program is now reactivated by Emergency Order # 73. Thus, the first week eligible for LTCS payments under the extended program is the week ending Saturday, November 21, 2020. Each WEEKLY PAYMENT CERTIFICATION is required to be submitted within 14 calendar days of the week for which payment is being sought. Each WEEKLY PAYMENT CERTIFICATION form should only cover a single weekly period. The LTCS program was expanded by Emergency Order #45 issued by Governor Sununu on May 18<sup>th</sup> to allow the qualified Medicaid provider to also submit qualifying contracted workers in addition to employees, granted they meet the eligibility requirements for the stipend discussed herein.

Payments will then be processed by NHES as WEEKLY PAYMENT CERTIFICATION forms are received. Payments will be issued directly from NHES to the provider and the provider is then required to provide the stipend payment to the workers.

**Note regarding providers within the developmental services system:** Providers under contract with the Area Agencies (AAs) will work through their 10 area agencies, who are designated as NH's organized healthcare delivery system. Area Agencies are the "Medicaid providers" of record, so the Area Agencies need to complete the enrollment with NHES for their vendors. These providers who contract with the Area Agencies must work closely with the AAs to ensure that neither they (provider/vendor) nor their employees are paid more than once a week or more than \$300 per week under the program.

### **Participating Provider Attestation on Use of Funds**

The funds from the LTCS Program may only be used to provide stipends for qualifying workers. As part of the application process, Qualified Medicaid Providers have previously attested that the funds will go to their appropriate frontline workers. Qualified Medicaid Providers who receive a stipend for workers who are not directly involved with serving clients or who do not need to be physically present in the facility or the client's home are subject to having the funding rescinded.

### **Stabilization Funding**

NHES will distribute \$300 per week in stipends to full-time qualifying frontline workers and \$150 per week in stipends to part time qualifying frontline workers from the Federal stimulus funds.

A full-time worker is an individual who works for 30 hours or more a week for one qualified Medicaid provider. For the purposes of this program, an individual is considered part-time if he or she works less than 30 hours a week. A minimum of seven and half (7.5) hours per week is required for an individual to be eligible for the part-time stipend. An individual may not receive more than a total of \$300 per week in stipends, even if that individual provides qualifying services for more than two Qualified Medicaid Providers.

### **Program Duration**

The Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) has reviewed the purpose of this program and has recommended that it is an allowable expenditure for Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), and has further recommended that continued disbursements from the Program would also be allowable expenditures from CRF as long as CRF criteria continue to be met in the review and approval process. The program shall end when the state of emergency ends or on December 30, 2020; whichever comes sooner.

***Please check back for additional program information which will be provided through published answers to FAQs.***