



American Rescue Plan Act

Home and Community Based Services Spending Narrative and Projection

July 12, 2021

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Letter from the State of Ohio Medicaid Director



Department of
Medicaid

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Maureen M. Corcoran, Director

June 12, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

The Ohio Department of Medicaid is collaborating with our partner agencies and stakeholder community to develop a strategic plan to use the funds provided by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) to transform HCBS by improving systems performance, making service delivery more efficient, and expanding overall access to long term services and supports.

Our initial spending plan narrative and projection outlines concepts that will be explored as we move forward in the planning process.

Ohio's biennial budget process was signed into law on June 30, 2021. Throughout the legislative process, discussions regarding policy, workforce and funding impacting home and community based services and other community services for Ohio's citizens were common among the administration, legislature, and stakeholders. With the legislative budget work behind us, we can turn our attention to engaging stakeholders in the development of a detailed plan for the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 home and community-based services funding in Ohio.

Assurances

- The state is using the federal funds attributable to the increased FMAP to supplement and not supplant existing state funds expended for Medicaid HCBS in effect as of April 1, 2021.
- The state is using the state funds equivalent to the amount of federal funds attributable to the increased FMAP to implement or supplement the implementation of one or more activities to enhance, expand, or strengthen HCBS under the Medicaid program.
- The state is not imposing stricter eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures for HCBS programs and services than were in place on April 1, 2021.
- The state is preserving covered HCBS, including the services themselves and the amount, duration, and scope of those services, in effect as of April 1, 2021.
- The state is maintaining HCBS provider payments at a rate no less than those in place as of April 1, 2021.

Point of Contact

Travis Moore will act as Ohio's point of contact for the quarterly spending plan and narrative submissions. Travis can be reached at James.Moore@medicaid.ohio.gov.

We look forward to providing more detail as the plan is developed and implemented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen M. Corcoran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Maureen M. Corcoran, Director

Executive Summary

Ohio's Rebalancing Efforts

The primary objective of Ohio's efforts to rebalance the delivery system for long term services and supports (LTSS) is to improve access to home and community-based long-term services and supports (HCBS) so that more individuals can choose to receive care outside of an institutional setting. Ohio has seven HCBS waiver programs and over 970 nursing and intermediate care facilities. Currently, sixty-nine percent of individuals are in HCBS and thirty-one percent receive their care in facilities. In 2013 through the Balancing Incentive Program funding, a no wrong door system was implemented. The Ohio Benefits Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Program partners with single-entry point entities that provide direct linkages to LTSS based on the individual's assessed needs via a questionnaire. In collaboration with other state partner agencies and interested stakeholders, Ohio has coordinated person-centered care planning as well as enhanced quality measurement and oversight. Comprehensive planning efforts to transform HCBS by improving systems performance, making service delivery more efficient, and expanding overall access to long-term services and supports are ongoing in Ohio.

Examination of Opportunities for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services

As the initial step in ensuring the funds made available by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) are used to maximize the impact on the delivery of HCBS, the Ohio Department of Medicaid in collaboration with other health and human services state agencies (Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), Ohio Department of Aging (ODA), Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) and Ohio Department of Education (ODE)) and interested stakeholders will develop a strategic plan that is focused on the following rebalancing components: person-centered, inclusive, efficient, effective, accountable, sustainable, coordinated, transparent and culturally competent care. The plan will take into account the existing transition activities through Money Follows the Person funding which is Ohio's Home Choice Program. In addition, the plan will build upon the current waiver alignment work to ensure all individuals who may need to transition between any Ohio HCBS waivers can do so as their needs change.

Ohio's initial work with respect to funding made available through ARPA will be the development of a detailed strategic plan. That plan will be included in future quarterly updates to our spending plan.

Home and Community Based Services Spending Plan Narrative

ARPA provides a unique opportunity to invest in the delivery system for home and community based services in a substantial and meaningful way. Ohio will pursue opportunities to build on previous and current efforts as we continue to work toward a system where HCBS services are as accessible as institutional long term care services. This work will require strategic review of services and rates as well as a focus on the information technology, workforce and infrastructure to support those services.

In order to maximize the impact on the delivery system, the first step must be an intentional and inclusive planning process. The Ohio Department of Medicaid, in conjunction with our partner agencies –ODA, DODD, OhioMHAS and ODE – are committed to a transparent planning process that considers perspectives of the individuals we serve, our providers and our advocates.

Initial work to identify opportunities for strategic investment that are impactful and sustainable is underway. As we continue our planning process, we anticipate new ideas and more defined priorities. A focused strategic plan will be detailed in upcoming quarterly updates to Ohio's HCBS Spending Plan.

Opportunities for Strategic Investments in Home and Community Based Services

Ohio intends to focus on areas for investment that will have the maximum long-term impact on the delivery of Medicaid home and community based services in the state. As we continue work with stakeholders to prioritize projects, the focus will be on projects that fall into one of eight categories:

- Immediate Support for Providers
- Improvements in Information Technology and Program Infrastructure
- Reimbursement and Expansion of Services
- Strengthening the Workforce for Home and Community Based Services
- Using Telehealth and Technology to Support Individuals in the Community
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives and Addressing Social Determinants of Health
- Care Management and Quality Improvement
- Supports for Individuals Receiving Services and Informal Caregivers

Immediate Support for Providers

The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing public health emergency have created unique challenges for providers of home and community based services. ODM, ODA, DODD, OhioMHAS and ODE, in conjunction with stakeholders, will explore opportunities to provide targeted, time-limited immediate relief with a portion of the ARPA funding.

Improvements in Information Technology and Program Infrastructure

Continued efforts to align programs offering HCBS in Ohio provide one of the greatest opportunities for long term impacts on the quality of care and effective use of resources. Ohio is especially interested in exploring efficiencies and improved data sharing across payers and programs through use of technology. Improved opportunities to align information collected when assessing individual needs and developing service plans can improve the quality of services provided, allow programs to be more responsive to changes in an individual's needs, support more effective use of HCBS resources and inform long term policy development.

Reimbursement and Expansion of Services

ARPA funds provide a unique opportunity to focus on reviewing existing services and reimbursement methodologies while considering opportunities to strengthen the delivery system by adding services that enhance opportunities for individuals to live and work in their communities. Ohio will consider initiatives that can streamline and simplify provider reimbursement, particularly for those providers who deliver services across a variety of HCBS programs.

Strengthening the Workforce for Home and Community Based Services

Like many states, one of the most significant challenges Ohio faces as it continues to strengthen home and community based options is developing and maintaining a robust workforce to support individuals in the community. The pandemic spotlighted the shortage of direct care workers in our home and community based settings.

Workforce issues impact programs throughout the delivery system and must be addressed in order for Ohio to sustain progress made through Home Choice and the Balancing Incentive Program. Challenges identified in past work include difficulties attracting individuals to the workforce, the absence of a career path, low wages, and challenges connecting individuals who need services with providers.

Ohio will work with stakeholders to identify innovative approaches to address workforce issues in ways that are sustainable and will have long term positive impacts.

Using Telehealth and Technology to Support Individuals in the Community

The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency provided an unforeseen opportunity to explore ways to use technology to provide home and community based services and to support individuals living in the community without compromising a person's quality of care. Expanding and sustaining the use of telehealth, deeming providers across systems and *allowing for* electronic signatures are some of the innovative approaches that Ohio will consider for permanent implementation. ARPA funding may also create opportunities to explore utilizing technology to support individuals so that they can live and participate in their communities.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives and Addressing Social Determinants of Health

Ohio has a diverse population who deserve person-centered care that is respectful of unique personal and cultural preferences. It is critical to integrate equity considerations into all strategy planning, implementation and evaluation of services and supports.

Governor Mike DeWine formed the COVID-19 Minority Health Strike Force (Strike Force) on April 20, 2020 in response to the disproportionate impact of the virus on minorities in Ohio. The Strike Force noted that “many Ohioans – including communities of color, people who are older and/or living with disabilities, residents of rural and Appalachian counties, immigrants, refugees, migrant workers and Ohioans who identify as LGBTQ, among others – are at risk for poor health outcomes.” Strategic planning and implementation of that plan provides an opportunity to build on the work of the Strike Force, especially as the social determinants of health impact the need for and access to LTSS.

[Care Management and Quality Improvement](#)

Regardless of the delivery system, ODM and our partner agencies are committed to ensuring all individuals receive quality services and effective care coordination. Ohio will explore projects that support the evolution of care coordination and integrated service delivery for dual eligible, older adults and Ohioans with disabilities, including models such as MyCare. These priorities will be important considerations as we develop and implement the ARPA strategic plan

[Supports for Individuals Receiving Services and Informal Caregivers](#)

Older Ohioans and Ohioans living with disabilities often rely on family and friends to remain in the community. These informal supports supplement Medicaid funded HCBS to ensure individuals receive the supports when and where they need them. Ohio will explore opportunities to invest ARPA dollars in resources that will support individuals who receive services and the caregivers they rely on.

Home and Community Based Services Spending Plan Projection

Between April 2021 and March 2022, Ohio anticipates earning additional federal funding of approximately \$460 million for approximately \$4.6 billion dollars in regular budgeted expenditures for HCBS and other eligible services.

PERIOD	Quarter Ended June 30, 2021	Quarter Ended September 30, 2021	Quarter Ended December 31, 2021	Quarter Ended March 31, 2022
ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL FMAP EARNED	\$114,540,000	\$114,540,000	\$114,540,000	\$114,540,000

Ohio has until March of 2024 to spend that additional federal revenue to enhance, expand or strengthen HCBS under the Medicaid program. The increased federal funding provides a unique opportunity to support providers through the remainder of the public health emergency while developing infrastructure and making program improvements that will provide the foundation for long term enhancements to the programs providing HCBS in Ohio. Stakeholder input will be a critical element in ensuring investment is made in opportunities with the greatest potential for impact on access to quality HCBS.

In addition to the focus on strategic planning and long term enhancements to the programs providing LTSS in Ohio, we recognize that the pandemic has also created the need for immediate supports in some instances. Ohio's ongoing work to develop a plan for effectively utilizing ARPA resources will consider those pressing needs in addition to identifying longer term opportunities for investment.

Stakeholder Engagement

State and local stakeholders for home and community based services in the Ohio Medicaid program present a wide variety of interests and perspectives. These stakeholders represent individuals who receive services, family members, community organizations, providers, educators, and advocates.

Ohio actively engages stakeholders who provide unique perspectives on the delivery of long term services and supports on an ongoing basis. We will look to existing relationships with stakeholders and stakeholder engagement efforts and work with our legislative partners to support the development and implementation of a strategic plan for Medicaid HCBS.

[Stakeholder Engagement in Development and Implementation of the ARPA Strategic Plan for Home and Community Based Services](#)

Ohio will build on existing stakeholder relationships as we consider stakeholder input in the development and implementation of the ARPA strategic plan. This approach will provide a varied and representative perspective as we further identify priorities, select initiatives for implementation and work toward long-term, meaningful change in the delivery system for home and community based services.

The process for development of the ARPA strategic plan must be transparent and inclusive. Ohio will solicit input regarding priorities and initiatives from stakeholders across the delivery system and throughout the state. This approach will give all Ohioans an opportunity to impact the priorities included in the ARPA strategic plan and provide information for consideration as Ohio plans investments in sustainable improvements to the long term care delivery system.

Stakeholder input will also be essential to successful implementation of the ARPA strategic plan for Medicaid HCBS . Ohio will leverage existing relationships with stakeholders to support implementation of the initiatives selected for implementation. The focus on stakeholder input throughout the development and implementation of the strategic plan will help ensure that Ohio uses the ARPA funding for home and community based services to create meaningful and sustainable improvement in the delivery of Medicaid HCBS.