May 31, 2019: Update on Idaho Medicaid expansion

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) is diligently working toward the implementation of an expanded Medicaid program by Jan. 1, 2020, as directed by the voter-approved Proposition 2 and Senate Bill 1204, which was passed by the Idaho Legislature and signed into law by Idaho Gov. Brad Little.

DHW staff is working on internal technical changes to the systems used to determine whether people are eligible for Medicaid.

DHW staff also are in negotiations with the federal government to determine changes in the state’s Medicaid plan to include the expanded population.

The Idaho statute related to Idaho Medicaid seeks to waive portions of federal regulations. The governing federal agency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, must approve those waivers. To fulfill that requirement, DHW staff are participating in the negotiation process to determine which waivers are needed as well as the terms of the waivers. A waiver application process typically takes 6 – 9 months. The approval process can take 9 – 18 months depending on the complexity of the waiver.

The waivers process will not delay enrollment or coverage for expanded Medicaid.

The information below outlines the work done by the department by May 31, 2019.

Medicaid state plan amendment

Here is what has been accomplished to date:

- Feb. 15, 2019: The Medicaid state plan amendment was submitted to the federal government. The federal government had 90 days to respond.

- May 16: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services sent DHW a request for additional information on the state plan amendment. When DHW submits its response to the questions, which will happen as soon as possible, the federal government has an additional 90 days to respond.
Medicaid expansion sideboards and waivers

Here is what has been accomplished to date:

- April 15: First meeting between DHW, the Idaho Department of Insurance (DOI), and federal partners to determine options for waivers.

- April 16: DHW and DOI began drafting waivers with guidance from federal partners, but negotiations are ongoing.

- April 25: DHW and DOI finalized a contract for waiver services with Milliman Actuarial Firm to help determine financial impacts of waivers. DHW provided data to Milliman to begin analysis.

- May 2: DHW and DOI met with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to discuss the scope of the waivers.

- May 9: DHW and DOI met with CMS to discuss the Coverage Choice Waiver for those Idahoans with income of 100-138 percent of the federal poverty level who currently purchase health insurance on the state-based health insurance exchange. They will become eligible for Medicaid after Jan. 1, 2020, if they choose, based on a sideboard in Senate Bill 1204.

- May 9: DHW, DOI, and Milliman discuss need for actuarial analysis of the Coverage Choice Waiver.

- May 13: Required notice was sent to tribes outlining the DHW’s intention to seek waivers for the sideboards requested in Senate Bill 1204. The notice allows tribes 30 days to request consultation or discussion regarding policies contained in the notice. Tribes must respond by June 13th. DHW will schedule a meeting upon request but must wait 60 days from the date the notice was sent to submit a waiver.

- May 31: The 1332 coverage choice waiver has been released for public comment.
Public comment opportunities

Specific dates will be shared when the department has more information, but for tentative planning purposes:
- May 31: The 1332 coverage choice waiver has been released for public comment.
- Middle of July: The initial 1115 Medicaid waiver will be released for public comment.

Key dates in the future:
- Nov. 1, 2019: Enrollment for expanded Medicaid will begin.
- Jan. 1, 2020: Coverage for expanded Medicaid will begin.