

Medicaid and Health-Related Social Needs

What Are Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN)?

HRSN are non-medical factors that influence a person's health and well-being. These factors include affordable and safe housing, nutritious and available food, consistent utilities, freedom from violence and discrimination, and health care availability, among others. Research has found that these factors can account for up to 55% of a person's health outcomes.¹

The Health-Related Social Needs of Medicaid Members

Medicaid members experience higher rates of HRSN than other Coloradans.² Additionally, Medicaid members who were food or housing insecure in 2025 were more than twice as likely to have poor general health, showing the clear connection between HRSN and health.

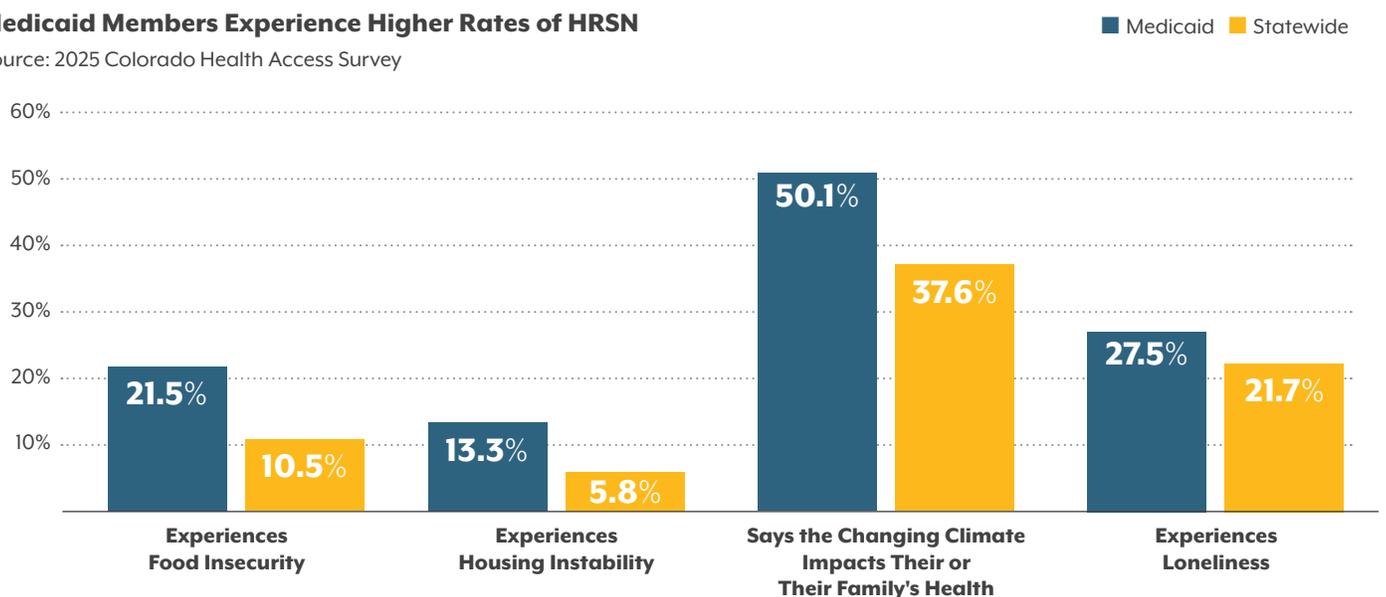
State Medicaid agencies have recognized the disproportionate impact of HRSN on Medicaid members and have taken steps to increase access to services that address these needs. Medicaid agencies can help meet these needs by:

1. Paying for existing services that address HRSN.
2. Providing care coordination to connect members to social service providers.
3. Investing in infrastructure and coordinating with other state agencies to support the implementation and delivery of HRSN services.

While Medicaid agencies typically cover clinical or medical services, states have begun covering HRSN using a variety of different policy levers, such as the Medicaid State Plan and federally approved waivers. States must receive permission from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to provide these services.

Medicaid Members Experience Higher Rates of HRSN

Source: 2025 Colorado Health Access Survey



¹ Bhavnani S.K., Zhang W., Bao D., et al. Subtyping Social Determinants of Health in All of Us: Network Analysis and Visualization Approach. (2023). MedRxiv: the preprint server for health sciences, 2023.01.27.23285125. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.01.27.23285125>

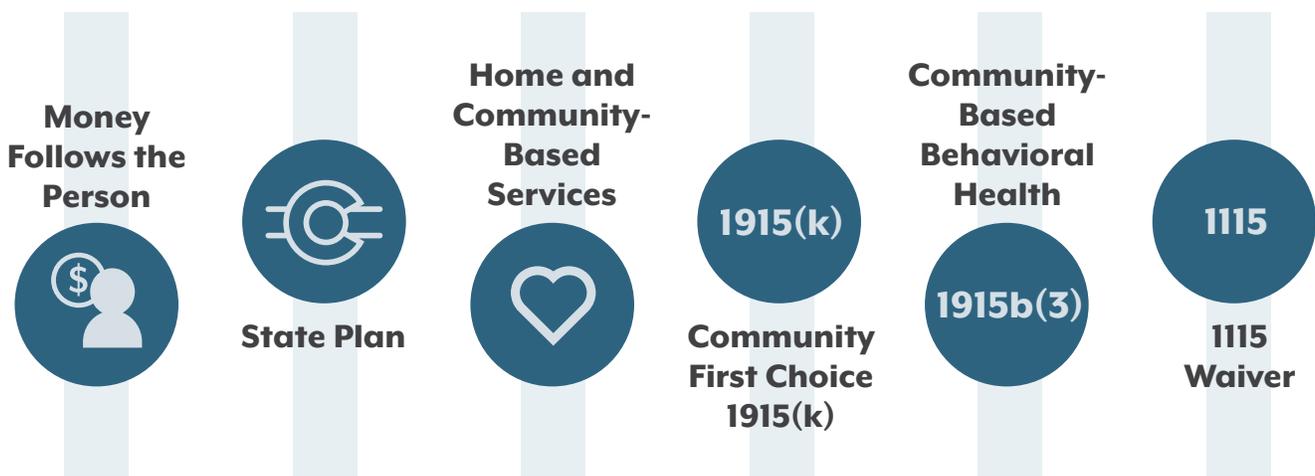
² Colorado Health Institute. 2025 Colorado Health Access Survey. (2025). <https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/colorado-health-access-survey-2025>

HCPF's Investments in HRSN

The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) has taken steps [to provide HRSN services to Health First Colorado and Child Health Plan Plus members](#) through existing mechanisms such as waivers and other programs. Many HRSN services are already available, and more information on these services is available in Table 1 of the HB23-1300 Feasibility Study.

Recent legislation has allowed HCPF to explore ways to expand HRSN service coverage through feasibility studies and has directed HCPF to use the results of these studies to inform an 1115 Waiver Amendment to request federal authority to cover certain HRSN services for specific populations.

HCPF has taken steps to provide HRSN services, including nutrition services, housing services, and case management through existing mechanisms and waivers:



HCPF has also explored ways to expand HRSN service coverage through different studies:

HB24-1322 Feasibility Study
(Completed in 2024)

HRSN FOCUS:
Housing and Nutrition Services

HB23-1300 Feasibility Study
(Completed in 2026)

HRSN FOCUS:
Housing, Nutrition, Extreme Weather,
and Social Support Services

Learn More

Some HRSN services are already available to Health First Colorado members through different HCPF programs. More information on current efforts and updates on future work are available on [HCPF's HRSN webpage](#). Contact hcpf_hrsn@state.co.us if you have questions or need more information. [Subscribe to our newsletter](#).



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