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Oct. 9, 2024

General Assembly Newsletter



COLORADO
Department of Health Care
Policy & Financing

Stay up to date on what's new at the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) with our newsletter created specifically for the Colorado General Assembly.

Editor's Note

This newsletter is published monthly while the legislature is in session, and quarterly outside of the legislative session.

Please continue to direct any questions to HCPF's legislative team:

- [Lauren Reveley](#), HCPF Government Relations Director
- [Jo Donlin](#), HCPF Legislative Liaison
- [Isabel Hinshaw](#), Legislative Analyst

Constituent Outreach

[Our constituent services form is online.](#) If you have a constituent who needs assistance or has questions about their Medicaid coverage, this is the best way to reach us. You can also email [Isabel Hinshaw](#), our Legislative Analyst, for help.

Brush Up on Your Medicaid Knowledge

As the 2025 Legislative Session approaches, is there a topic you'd like to explore in more depth? Do all our acronyms leave you breathless? Can you figure out how the different HCPF offices fit together? How can HCPF gobble up $\frac{1}{3}$ of the budget? How exactly does the federal/state partnership play out?

We know our world isn't the easiest to navigate. After the election, HCPF plans to provide some virtual, short trainings on key topics. We also may produce some online trainings and post the videos on our website, so legislators and legislative staff can review them when it's most convenient. If there's a particular topic you'd like us to include, please contact [Isabel Hinshaw](#).

A Message from Executive Director Kim Bimestefer

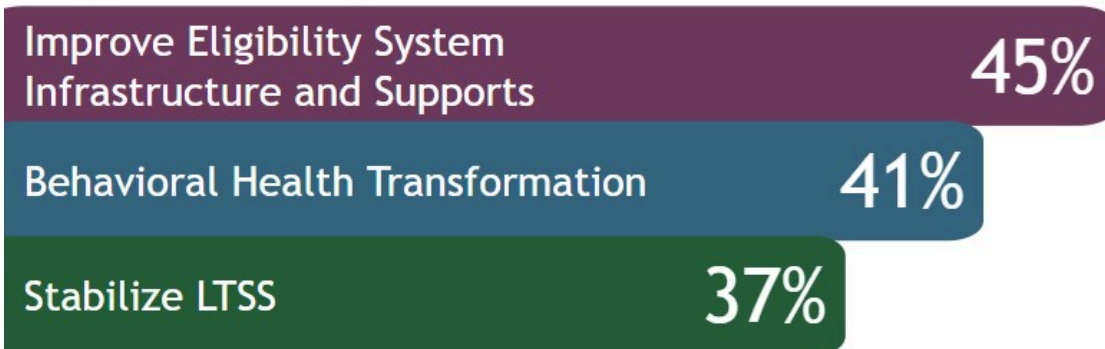


Public Health Emergency Unwind Data & Select Priorities

Thank you to the more than 2,100 registrants and 1,550+ attendees at the HCPF Annual Stakeholder Webinar on Aug. 27. We reviewed major initiatives for fiscal year (FY) 2023-24, priority initiatives for FY 2024-25 and held a Public Health Emergency (PHE) Unwind panel that provided valued insights from HCPF experts and special guests, including our county partners, Connect for Health Colorado and the Colorado Health Institute. Recordings and materials are [posted on our website](#).

One of the goals of our Annual Stakeholder Webinar is to query and document the perspectives of our partners and stakeholders. When asked to rank their top HCPF FY 2024-25 priorities, attendees selected improving the eligibility system infrastructure and supports (45%), transforming behavioral health (41%), and stabilizing long-term supports and services (37%) as the most important.

Which HCPF priorities are the most important to you?



Other highlights of our Annual Webinar include:

Keep Coloradans Covered. In accordance with our February 2024 budget assumptions, Colorado's Medicaid membership is returning to pre-pandemic levels. Our PHE Unwind was May 2023 through April 2024, plus the 90-day reconsideration period, which ended July 2024. Post PHE Unwind metrics are reflecting some of the advances made during the PHE and the PHE Unwind, to the betterment of the member experience and county eligibility processing workloads. More information is available on our PHE [website](#). Some key metrics include:

- Unwind renewal approvals were within 2% of prepandemic norms (55% vs 57%), and disenrollments were as well (43% vs 41%). Since then, renewals have improved significantly: **In May, 80% of renewals were approved** (after 60 days of the 90-day reconsideration period); **In June, 79% of renewals were approved** (after 30 days of the 90-day reconsideration period), **and in July, 78% remain covered. These percentages continue to increase over the next 90 days, during the reconsideration period.**
- Automation is critical to improving the member renewal experience and reducing county workloads. In May 59%, June 56% and July 62% of household renewals were completed through automation innovations (or ex parte). That's a significant and meaningful improvement over the 33% average during the PHE Unwind. This improvement is to the betterment of the member experience and county workload. (Note: ex parte can only occur on renewal approvals, not denials).
- Procedural denials are now below the 12% prepandemic levels, at 9% for May renewals (after 60 days), 10% for June (after 30 days) and 10% for July.

As noted in our [Improving Performance Across Numerous Metrics chart on this webpage](#), all metrics are headed in the right direction. Performance is getting better, but we still have a lot of work to do.

Leveraging American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for Long Term Transformation. HCPF is on track to leverage one-time federal stimulus funds for long term transformation to the betterment of our members. We have completed 92% of the 61 projects; thank you to the almost 11,000 partners who engaged in our stakeholder meetings to frame the goals and focus areas associated with this work. We are pleased that more than 90% of our funds are directly benefiting the community (with 3.5% for administration). We have spent 74% of the \$550 million to date. You can find more information on our [website](#).

Transforming Behavioral Health. HCPF continues to collaborate with the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to strengthen Colorado's Behavioral Health Safety Net System. This includes a new set of safety net services and connecting new provider types to [new Medicaid payment models](#) to ensure sustainable access to a full continuum of BH care for Medicaid members.

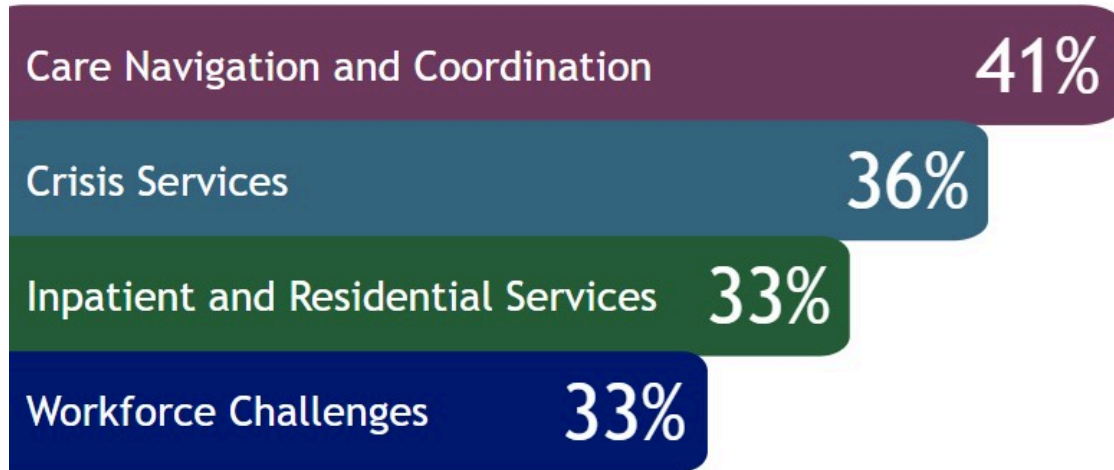
These changes were specifically designed to expand the provider network and develop an updated model for Comprehensive Providers (previously called community mental health centers, or CMHCs), and a new payment model for small and medium sized providers. These Essential Safety Net Providers offer care coordination, one or more of a select set of behavioral health services, and often specialize in services for certain populations like children in foster care, individuals with co-occurring disabilities, or people experiencing homelessness. These providers have long been part of the safety net, but previously did not have access to safety net funding. Starting July 1 of this year, Essential Providers are eligible to apply for an enhanced payment if they can demonstrate their ability to meet a safety net standard of care.

As of Aug. 23, BHA has received 327 total applications from providers to become Comprehensive or Essential Safety Net Providers. So far BHA has issued 18 Comprehensive Provider approvals and 87 Essential Provider approvals, and HCPF has successfully enrolled 5 Comprehensive Providers across 28 locations and enrolled 60 Essential Providers. If you are interested in becoming a safety net provider, please visit

the BHA [Behavioral health licensing, designation and approvals](#) website to learn more!

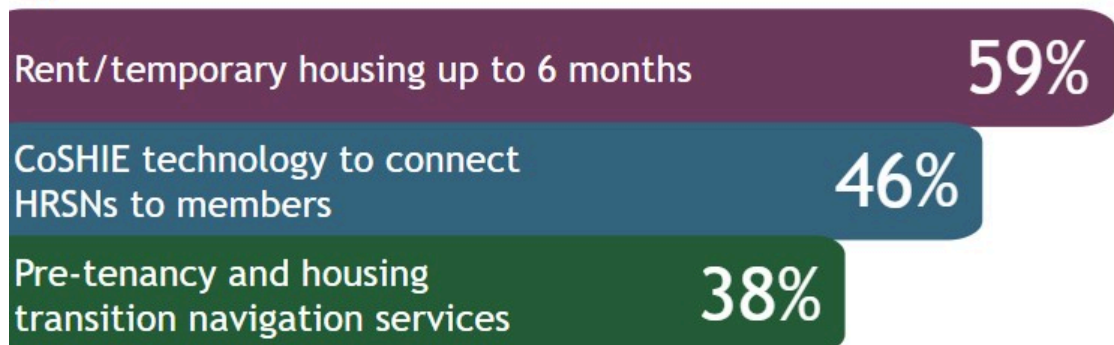
Webinar attendees also shared their views via the poll below on the behavioral health areas they would like more focus on from HCPF, in our efforts to help transform Colorado’s BH system.

What behavioral health issues need more attention from HCPF?



Colorado Social Health Information Exchange (CoSHIE). The [CoSHIE](#) leads the next phase of evolving prescriber tools. It will enable providers, care coordinators, Regional Accountable Entities (RAEs) and community health workers to better support individuals through payer programs, state programs and community supports. Long term, the tool will help provider care teams, RAEs and community workers connect individuals to payer health improvement programs like prenatal and related maternity programs, diabetes management and other payer-based, health improvement related supports. It will also help connect individuals and patients to state health related social needs (HRSNs) programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), or Housing Vouchers. Last, it will further connect individuals and patients to community food banks, homeless shelters and other related supports. The first wave of the CoSHIE starts Sept. 30, 2024, with behind-the-scenes improvements in systems aimed at coordinating care. Webinar attendees shared that they were most excited about rent/temporary housing up to 6 months (59%), CoSHIE connecting Medicaid members with HRSNs (46%) and pre-tenancy and housing transition services (38%).

Which Health Related Social Needs advances are you most excited about?



Drive Value Based Care. We continue to prioritize [value based payments](#) in primary care, maternity care, prescription drugs, [hospital care](#), and behavioral health to reward improved access to high-quality, equitable and affordable care. In 2022, 36% of Medicaid payments were value based payments and we continue to grow this.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership in leading transformative advances to the betterment of our members and all Coloradans.

Legislative Updates

On Sept. 19, HCPF presented to the Joint Budget Committee on the Public Health Emergency Unwind. The recording is on the [Joint Budget Committee page](#) and the slides and handouts are available on HCPF's [Legislative Resource page](#).

On Sept. 24, HCPF, in collaboration with the Department of Human Services (CDHS), presented to the Joint Technology Committee, alongside the counties, on the progress of the Colorado Benefit Management System and the collaboration occurring between the state agencies and counties. The audio recording is on the [Joint Technology Committee page](#).

Public Health Emergency Unwind

HCPF continues to receive questions from legislators about constituents who may have lost their Medicaid coverage during the redetermination period following the PHE. This period is known as “the Unwind.” If you have a constituent needing help with a Medicaid renewal or a new application for Medicaid coverage, please contact [Isabel Hinshaw](#). For the latest updates and most current HCPF data related to the “Unwind,” please visit the [Continuous Coverage Unwind Data Reporting page](#).

ACC Phase III Updates

On Sept. 11, 2024, HCPF issued the following intent to award for the four Regional Accountable Entity (RAE) contracts in Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC) Phase III:

Region	Entity
1	Rocky Mountain Health Plans Note: Rocky Mountain Health Plans will continue to operate the PRIME MCO in nine counties across Region 1.
2	Northeast Health Partners
3	Colorado Community Health Alliance
4	Colorado Access
Denver Health will continue to operate an MCO as part of ACC Phase III.	

The ACC is the primary delivery system for Health First Colorado (Colorado’s Medicaid program). The ACC was created in 2011 to improve health care access and outcomes for Health First Colorado members. RAEs are responsible for promoting member health and well-being by administering the capitated behavioral health benefit, establishing and supporting networks of providers, and coordinating medical and community-based services for members in their region. Current contracts with the RAEs end on June 30, 2025. The next iteration of the ACC, referred to as Phase III, will begin on July 1, 2025.

ACC Phase III was designed through extensive and invaluable stakeholder engagement. HCPF staff met with more than 5,700 participants, including members, providers, and representatives from community organizations, across 135 stakeholder meetings over the past 18 months, to identify opportunities to improve the program. Learn more about how feedback shaped ACC Phase III in [this factsheet](#).

ACC Phase III takes important steps to modernize our Medicaid delivery system, increase accountability and drive better outcomes for our members. However, awarding contracts is just one part of this process. Over the coming months, we will be working with internal and external partners to implement the policies and programs outlined in the RAE contracts. We will continue to post updates and other resources for members, providers, counties and other key partners on [our website](#) and through this newsletter.

FY 2023-24 Legislative Reports and Legislative Requests for Information (LRFI) Reports

HCPF has submitted four Legislative Reports and two LRFIs to the General Assembly since the last edition of the newsletter. You can find them all on HCPF's [website](#).

County-By-County Resources

Our [county fact sheets](#) provide an annual snapshot, by fiscal year, for Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) activity, including average annual caseload and top five claim types for each county. This is a great way to see the impact of and need for publicly funded health insurance in the communities you represent. If you need more information about the people you serve, please reach out to the HCPF Legislative Liaison, [Jo Donlin](#) or 720-610-7795.

Legislator Resource Center

The [Legislator Resource Center](#) on our website is available to help legislators and legislative staff easily find information. It includes links to reports, fact sheets and overviews of the budget process to help inform legislators.

Follow HCPF on Social Media

We invite legislators to follow us on social media to stay informed of news and happenings at HCPF. You can follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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