Alaska’s Section 1115 Behavioral Health Waiver

Continuum of Care/1115 Task Force
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Gennifer Moreau-Johnson, Director
Division of Behavioral Health
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
What is a Section 1115 Waiver?

• Waivers provide states an avenue to **test new approaches** in Medicaid that differ from what is required by federal statute

• Waivers can provide states considerable **flexibility** in how they operate their programs, beyond what is available under current law*

• Waivers must be **budget neutral** to the federal government (costs under a waiver must not exceed federal costs without the waiver)

Goal of Alaska’s Section 1115 Waiver

Create a data-driven, integrated behavioral health system of care for Alaskans with serious mental illness, severe emotional disturbance, and/or substance use disorders.
Proposed Waiver Outcomes

The state has **three overarching goals** that will be measured as part of the demonstration:

1. **Rebalance** the current behavioral health system of care to reduce Alaska’s over-reliance on acute, institutional care and shift to more community- or regionally-based care.

2. **Intervene** as early as possible in the lives of Alaskans to address behavioral health symptoms before they cascade into functional impairments.

3. **Improve** overall behavioral health system accountability by reforming the existing system of care.
Target Populations

- **Group 1**: Children, Adolescents and their Parents or Caretakers with, or at risk of, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders
- **Group 2**: Transitional Age Youth and Adults with Acute Mental Health Needs
- **Group 3**: Adolescents and Adults with Substance Use Disorders
Expanded Services and Provider Types

• New **Medicaid-covered services** under the waiver will establish a robust continuum of care designed to anticipate and address the range of behavioral health needs of the target populations

• **Benefits** for all target populations are designed:
  • To decrease use of acute, costly services by conducting universal screenings;
  • With a focus on early intervention, when symptoms are first identified;
  • To expand sub-acute, community-based step-up/step-down clinical services as alternatives to residential and inpatient services; and
  • To increase community-based supports to maintain recovery, health and wellness.
Waiver Implementation Status

• The state submitted the Section 1115 Behavioral Health waiver to CMS on January 31, 2018
• Negotiations for waiver approval began in April 2018
• The SUD portion (Group 3 target population) of Alaska’s Section 1115 waiver was approved on November 21, 2018
• The behavioral health portions of the waiver (Groups 1 and 2 target populations) are still being finalized; we are hopeful that the state will get final approval within the next two- to three months
Waiver Implementation Status, cont.

• The state plans to begin enhanced SUD services on July 1, 2019 with a regional phase in.

• The state is planning a three-year phase-in plan to implement services included in this demonstration; the state will be divided up into regional hubs that will serve as geographical centers for the provision of services.
Proposed Regions with Hubs for Each Region

• Region 1 - Anchorage Municipality (Anchorage)
• Region 2 - Fairbanks North Star Borough (Fairbanks)
• Region 3 - Northern and Interior Region (Fairbanks and Utqiagvik)
• Region 4 - Kenai Peninsula Borough (Soldotna and Homer)
• Region 5 - MatSu Borough (Wasilla)
• Region 6 - Western Region (Kotzebue, Nome, and Bethel)
• Region 7 - Northern Southeast Region (Juneau and Sitka)
• Region 8 - Southern Southeast Region (Ketchikan)
• Region 9 - Gulf Coast/Aleutian Region (Anchorage, Dillingham, and Kodiak)
Next Steps

- Webinars: Available statewide
- Provider Roundtables: Small discussions
- Continuum of Care/1115 Task Force: Strategic advice
- Newly-created e-Memo distribution list
Questions