

# 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)

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/section-1115-medicaid-demonstration-waivers-the-current-landscape-of-approved-and-pending-waivers/>

# 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