

ANCOR Forum

ANCOR's Advocacy Brings Addition Medicaid Funding One Step Closer to Becoming Law



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Late last night, the House Energy & Commerce Committee advanced its portion of the FY2021 budget reconciliation package, which aims to provide needed funding and other resources to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. ANCOR is thrilled that the committee-passed reconciliation package includes a 7.35% FMAP bump dedicated to Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). This HCBS-specific FMAP bump is in addition to the current 6.2% global Medicaid FMAP bump from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act that is authorized through December 31, 2021. That 6.2% FMAP bump is for a state's entire Medicaid program and allocation of those funds is up to the state's discretion.

The HCBS-specific FMAP bump would begin on April 1, 2021 and last until March 31, 2022. The money must supplement current Medicaid HCBS funding, not supplant any state dollars. The legislation provides multiple ways to utilize the new funding, including:

- Increase provider reimbursement so that DSP wages may be increased
- Provide DSPs with paid sick, family, and/or medical leave
- Provide DSPs with hazard pay, overtime, or shift differential pay
- Purchase PPE, including PPE not usually covered by Medicaid
- Disburse retainer payments as needed
- Recruit new DSPs
- Provide COVID-19 specific training for all workers, consumers, and family members
- Implement assistive technology
- Support family caregivers, including through payment and purchase of PPE
- Defray expenses incurred to implement the HCBS settings rule

- Reduce HCBS waiting lists
- Support individuals living nursing homes to transition to the community
- Assist individuals who have moved to nursing homes due to COVID-19 to return back to their homes
- Pay for mental health, rehabilitation, and other services now needed by consumers due to COVID-19
- Develop accessible public health materials, including in plain language
- Employ ASL interpretation and other interpretation services to assist in providing HCBS

While this HCBS funding is not yet federal law, passage out of the House Energy & Commerce Committee leaves very few hurdles for this critical funding to become law. We expect, with few amendments, the House package to be passed by the Senate on a party line vote per the budget reconciliation rules. As always, we will continue to update you as this package makes its way through the legislative process.

