

Pathway to Prosperity
Zoom Public Hearing (03/03/25 @ 11:00 AM CST)

Jennifer Dedman: Good everyone I'm Jennifer Dedman with the Division of Medical Services, the Department of Human Services. I'm opening this public comment. I'm going to go ahead and read this long script and then after I'm done reading the notice, we will open the floor for public comment.

This is for the proposed Amendment to Medicaid, Section 1115 Demonstration Project, Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me (ARHOME).

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Medical Services (DMS) is providing public notice of its intent to submit to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) a written request to amend the Medicaid Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me (ARHOME) Demonstration Project (Waiver) and to hold public hearings to receive comments on the amendments to the Demonstration.

In accordance with 42 §CFR 431.408, this notice provides a summary of the waiver amendment request and serves to formally open the 30-day public comment period, which will begin February 2, 2025, and conclude on March 3, 2025. Specifically, DHS seeks public comment on its Pathway to Prosperity amendment request to include the following enhancements to the current ARHOME demonstration:

- 1)** The proposed amendment will provide focused care coordination services from a Success Coaching resource to Medicaid beneficiaries who are not progressing toward improved health goals and economic independence. Pathway to Prosperity applies to all individuals ages 19-64 who are eligible through the new adult expansion group, who have income ranging from 0% FPL to 138% FPL, and who are enrolled in a Qualified Health Plan (QHP).
- 2)** DHS will utilize data matching to the extent possible to identify individuals who may benefit from extra support to reach their health and economic goals. If DHS confirms that an individual is not on track through direct contact with the individual, it will leverage resources through QHPs, state agencies such as Arkansas Workforce Centers, and Arkansas Career and Technical Education, as well as local community partners, to provide focused care coordination services to eligible individuals. Success Coaching will be delivered by entities that have experience of working with individuals who face the challenges of poverty and will include training to provide focused care coordination services. Focused care coordination services include the establishment and monitoring of a Personal Development Plan (PDP).
- 3)** Employment is vital to a person's long-term health as poverty is directly linked to poor health outcomes. If a person is not employed, or is at risk of long-term dependency, he or she must be engaged in qualifying advancement described in the PDP to be considered "on track." Advancement can come from a variety of activities including training, workforce development, apprenticeships, and internships. Learning includes formal education, vocational education, and activities that enhance a person's skills such as mentoring programs or life skills development.

Service in one's community may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including caring for a dependent child, an elderly parent, or a person with a disability.

- 4) Individuals who decline to participate in Pathway to Prosperity workforce development for three months will have QHP benefits, and Medicaid eligibility suspended through the remainder of the calendar year.
- 5) To become "on track" and have QHP benefits restored, they will notify their Success Coaching entity of their intention to cooperate with their PDP. As Pathway to Prosperity does not make compliance with a condition of eligibility, individuals will not be required to complete a new Medicaid application unless they have passed their date for their annual redetermination of eligibility.
- 6) During the suspension period, DHS will not make monthly premium payments nor related payments to the QHP on behalf of the individual.
- 7) DHS assumes 50% of individuals assigned to Success Coaching will cooperate with DHS and be "on track" with no change in their QHP benefits; 25% of individuals will be "early movers" off Medicaid due to change in household income and move to other coverage; and 25% will fail to cooperate and have benefits suspended. However, DHS assumes 50% of those who were suspended will subsequently inform DHS of their willingness to cooperate and thereby have benefits restored. The Pathway to Prosperity amendment has an anticipated start date of January 1, 2026.

The proposed amendment request and full public notice is available for public review on the DHS website at <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/rules/arhome/>. In addition, the draft documents are also available for hard copy review at the Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Rules Promulgation, 2nd floor Donaghey Plaza South Building, 7th and Main Streets, P.O. Box 1437, Slot S295, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437.

During the public comment period, the public is invited to provide written comments to DHS via US postal service or electronic mail, as well as make comments verbally during the four public hearings. DHS will hold four public hearings on the following dates, times, and locations:

The First Public Hearing: General Public Forum that was held on February 12, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. via zoom.

The Second Public Hearing: ARHOME Advisory Panel (in-person and online) February 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the DHS building.

The Third Public Hearing: General Public Forum. That was ARHOME was a General Public Forum (online) on February 19, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Today is **Public Hearing #4 General Forum** (in person and online) at 10 a.m. Sorry at 11a.m. At Mercy Hospital, in Fort Smith, Arkansas. In the Executive Administrative Conference Room.

Interested persons should submit all comments to DHS on the proposed amendment on or before March 3, 2025. That is today's date. Comments can be submitted via email to ORP@dhs.arkansas.gov or by mail to

Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Policy & Rules, 2nd Floor Donaghey Plaza South Building, 7th and Main Streets, P. O. Box 1437, Slot S295, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437.

Please note that public comments submitted in response to this notice are considered public documents. A public comment, including the commenter's name and any personal information contained within the public comment, will be made publicly available.

The Arkansas Department of Human Services is in compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act and is operated and managed and delivers services without regard to religion, disability, political affiliation, veteran status, age, race, color, or national origin. If you need a copy of the draft amendment or public notice documents in a different format, such as large print or in hard copy, contact the Office of Policy & Rules at 501-320-6428.

That concludes the reading of the public notice. Elizabeth, I just saw your comment. I'm sorry about that. I'll now open the floor for public comment. If you have a public comment, please raise your hand and I will open the mic to you.

Okay, hearing none. I will wait for five minutes, and if we do not receive any public comments, will it be okay to conclude the meeting, Mac?

Mac Golden: Yes

Jennifer Dedman: Okay, we'll begin a 5-minute wait.

Okay 5 minutes have elapsed. Last call for public comment.

Okay, hearing none, I'm prepared to conclude the meeting. Is there anything that you need from me, Mac or Barry?

Mac Golden: No, thank you.

Barry Rowland: No

Jennifer Dedman: All right. Thank you very much.