

## HPMS E-Mail

**Date:** March 20, 2020

**Subject:** Section 1135 Waiver Flexibilities - Washington Coronavirus Disease 2019

Today, CMS approved an 1135 Medicaid waiver request for the state of Washington. The state submitted its request for 1135 waiver authority on March 15, 2020 and in keeping with CMS's commitment to ensure our state partners have the tools they need to combat COVID-19, the agency acted within days to approve a wide variety of Medicaid flexibilities.

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation a national emergency. This bold action enables the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to waive certain requirements in Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP under Section 1135 emergency authority. CMS may grant state and territorial Medicaid agencies a wider range of flexibilities, and states may now submit Section 1135 waiver requests for CMS approval to remove barriers that interfere with needed services.

"I recognize that Governor Inslee and his team are working around the clock to respond to the escalating crisis in Washington State," said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. "We are committed to stripping away any red tape that gets in the way of states or providers effectively managing this public health emergency."

The state's approval letter can be found [here](#), and includes flexibilities that enable the state to focus its resources on combatting the outbreak and provide the best possible care to Medicaid beneficiaries in their state.

CMS provides guidance to states on how to apply for Section 1135 waivers through the Medicaid Disaster Response Tool Kit, which can be found [here](#). CMS will continue to expeditiously review and approve as appropriate all Section 1135 waivers and other requests that the agency receives to ensure that we are providing our state partners with the maximum flexibility they need to care for their Medicaid beneficiaries during the public health emergency. To support these efforts, CMS is developing checklists and tools to expedite requests and approvals for waivers and other commonly requested flexibilities.

Washington is the second state to receive approval for 1135 Medicaid waiver authority, following approval of the Florida request on March 16, 2020. All Section 1135 approval letters will be posted [here](#) as they are issued.

This action, and earlier CMS actions in response to the COVID-19 virus, are part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19 click here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. For information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).

