



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kentucky to provide increased access to Medicaid health services for students

FRANKFORT, Ky. (November 8, 2019) - The Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) has received final approval for a Medicaid state plan amendment that will expand health services in schools. The change to Medicaid will be phased in during the current school year, and approval for direct services reimbursements to school districts is retroactive to August 1, 2019.

"Approval of this amendment is a game-changer," said CHFS Secretary Adam Meier. "This will provide additional resources to support increased access to mental health services for students using money already being spend by school districts."

Children with Medicaid coverage often do not receive needed health care services due to barriers to seeking care, such as lack of transportation, parent work schedules, or finding a nearby provider who accepts Medicaid.

“This exciting change will be instrumental in providing additional physical and mental health resources to students,” said Wayne Lewis, Commissioner for the Kentucky Department of Education.

Historically, schools were only able to bill Medicaid if the services were outlined in a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP). Services like mental health assessments, mental health counseling, speech therapy, or nurse services provided to children at school without an IEP were not billable. The amendment will now allow additional services provided at no cost to be covered by Medicaid for eligible students.

“The Medicaid state plan amendment will allow school districts to use federal funding to expand access to qualifying physical and mental health services for students enrolled in Medicaid,” explained CHFS Deputy Secretary Kristi Putnam. “This will be especially helpful in school districts’ ability to meet the requirements of Senate Bill 1,” she added.

Senate Bill 1, passed by the 2019 General Assembly, mandated increased mental health access and services inside the school, but the law was not attached to additional funding to implement the mandates. This change to Kentucky’s Medicaid state plan helps provide new funding. Examples of services that could now be covered include physical and behavioral health screenings, immunizations, dental care, speech therapy supports, and mental health counseling.

CHFS and KDE will provide additional information to health care providers and school districts in the next few weeks. In the meantime, the state is providing superintendents information on program requirements and operational procedures to support improved health care access for students. School districts are not required to participate, but if they choose to, superintendents will be able to direct

the new Medicaid funding to address needs specific to students and schools in their communities.

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.