

## **Table of Contents**

**State/Territory Name: North Carolina**

**State Plan Amendment (SPA) #: 20-0011**

This file contains the following documents in the order listed:

- 1) Approval Letter
- 2) CMS 179 Form/Summary Form (with 179-like data)
- 3) Approved SPA Pages



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September 4, 2020

Mr. Dave Richard  
Deputy Secretary, North Carolina Medicaid  
Division of Health Benefits  
NC Department of Health and Human Services  
1985 Umstead Drive  
2501 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2501

Re: North Carolina State Plan Amendment (SPA) 20-0011

Dear Mr. Richard:

We have reviewed the proposed amendment to add section 7.4 Medicaid Disaster Relief for the COVID-19 National Emergency to your Medicaid state plan, as submitted under transmittal number (TN) 20-0011. This amendment proposes to implement temporary policies, which are different from those policies and procedures otherwise applied under your Medicaid state plan, during the period of the Presidential and Secretarial emergency declarations related to the COVID-19 outbreak (or any renewals thereof).

On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued a proclamation that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency by the authorities vested in him by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and consistent with section 1135 of the Social Security Act (Act). On March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 1135(b) of the Act, the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services invoked his authority to waive or modify certain requirements of titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Act as a result of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the extent necessary, as determined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to ensure that sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of individuals enrolled in the respective programs and to ensure that health care providers that furnish such items and services in good faith, but are unable to comply with one or more of such requirements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, may be reimbursed for such items and services and exempted from sanctions for such noncompliance, absent any determination of fraud or abuse. This authority took effect as of 6PM Eastern Standard Time on March 15, 2020, with a retroactive effective date of March 1, 2020. The emergency period will terminate, and this state plan provision will no longer be in effect, upon termination of the public health emergency, including any extensions.

Pursuant to section 1135(b)(5) of the Act, for the period of the public health emergency, CMS is modifying the requirement at 42 C.F.R. 430.20 that the state submit SPAs related to the COVID-19 public health emergency by the final day of the quarter, to obtain a SPA effective

date during the quarter, enabling SPAs submitted after the last day of the quarter to have an effective date in a previous quarter, but no earlier than the effective date of the public health emergency.

The State of North Carolina requested a waiver of public notice requirements applicable to the SPA submission process. Pursuant to section 1135(b)(1)(C) of the Act, CMS is waiving public notice requirements applicable to the SPA submission process. Public notice for SPAs is required under 42 C.F.R. §447.205 for changes in statewide methods and standards for setting Medicaid payment rates, 42 C.F.R. §447.57 for changes to premiums and cost sharing, and 42 C.F.R. §440.386 for changes to Alternative Benefit Plans (ABPs). Pursuant to section 1135(b)(1)(C) of the Act, CMS is approving the state's request to waive these notice requirements otherwise applicable to SPA submissions.

The State of North Carolina also requested a waiver to modify the tribal consultation timeline applicable to this SPA submission process. Pursuant to section 1135(b)(5) of the Act, CMS is also allowing states to modify the timeframes associated with tribal consultation required under section 1902(a)(73) of the Act, including shortening the number of days before submission or conducting consultation after submission of the SPA.

These waivers or modifications of the requirements related to SPA submission timelines, public notice, and tribal consultation apply only with respect to SPAs that meet the following criteria: (1) the SPA provides or increases beneficiary access to items and services related to COVID-19 (such as by waiving or eliminating cost sharing, increasing payment rates or amending ABPs to add services or providers); (2) the SPA does not restrict or limit payment or services or otherwise burden beneficiaries and providers; and (3) the SPA is temporary, with a specified sunset date that is not later than the last day of the declared COVID-19 public health emergency (or any extension thereof). We nonetheless encourage states to make all relevant information about the SPA available to the public so they are aware of the changes.

We conducted our review of your submittal according to the statutory requirements at section 1902(a) of the Act and implementing regulations. This letter is to inform you that North Carolina's Medicaid SPA Transmittal Number 20-0011 is approved effective March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020. Enclosed is a copy of the CMS-179 summary form and the approved state plan pages. This SPA approval is in addition to the North Carolina Disaster Relief SPAs approved on May 18, 2020, August 18, 2020, and August 20, 2020, and does not supersede anything approved in those SPAs.

Please contact Charles Friedrich at (404) 562-7404 or by email at [Charles.Friedrich@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Charles.Friedrich@cms.hhs.gov) if you have any questions about this approval. We appreciate the efforts of you and your staff in responding to the needs of the residents of the State of North Carolina and the health care community.

Sincerely,

Anne Marie Costello  
Acting Deputy Administrator and Director  
Center for Medicaid & CHIP Services

Enclosures

<b>TRANSMITTAL AND NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF STATE PLAN MATERIAL</b>	1. TRANSMITTAL NUMBER: 20-0011	2. STATE NC
	3. PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION: TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (MEDICAID)	
<b>FOR: HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION</b>	4. PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE March 1, 2020	
<b>TO: REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES</b>		

5. TYPE OF PLAN MATERIAL (*Check One*):

NEW STATE PLAN                       AMENDMENT TO BE CONSIDERED AS NEW PLAN                       AMENDMENT

COMPLETE BLOCKS 6 THRU 10 IF THIS IS AN AMENDMENT (*Separate Transmittal for each amendment*)

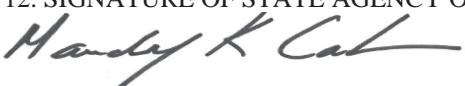
6. FEDERAL STATUTE/REGULATION CITATION: Sections 201/301 National Emergencies Act Sec. 1135(b) Social Security Act; Title XIX of the Social Security Act	7. FEDERAL BUDGET IMPACT: a. FFY 2020    \$174,162,352 b. FFY 2021    \$0.00
8. PAGE NUMBER OF THE PLAN SECTION OR ATTACHMENT:  7.4 Medicaid Disaster Relief SPA Template Pages 89z4 - 89z14	9. PAGE NUMBER OF THE SUPERSEDED PLAN SECTION OR ATTACHMENT ( <i>If Applicable</i> ): NEW

10. SUBJECT OF AMENDMENT:

Medicaid Disaster Relief Round 3

11. GOVERNOR'S REVIEW (*Check One*):

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REPORTED NO COMMENT                       OTHER, AS SPECIFIED: Secretary  
 COMMENTS OF GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ENCLOSED  
 NO REPLY RECEIVED WITHIN 45 DAYS OF SUBMITTAL

12. SIGNATURE OF STATE AGENCY OFFICIAL: 	16. RETURN TO:  Office of the Secretary Department of Health and Human Services 2001 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-20014
13. TYPED NAME: Mandy Cohen, MD, MPH	
14. TITLE: Secretary	
15. DATE SUBMITTED: <i>6/25/2020</i>	

**FOR REGIONAL OFFICE USE ONLY**

17. DATE RECEIVED: 6/25/20	18. DATE APPROVED: 09/04/20
PLAN APPROVED – ONE COPY ATTACHED	
19. EFFECTIVE DATE OF APPROVED MATERIAL: 03/01/20	20. SIGNATURE OF REGIONAL OFFICIAL:
21. TYPED NAME: Anne Marie Costello	22. TITLE: Acting Deputy Administrator and Director

23. REMARKS:

**Section 7 – General Provisions****7.4. Medicaid Disaster Relief for the COVID-19 National Emergency**

On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued a proclamation that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency by the authorities vested in him by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), and consistent with section 1135 of the Social Security Act (Act). On March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 1135(b) of the Act, the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services invoked his authority to waive or modify certain requirements of titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Act as a result of the consequences COVID-19 pandemic, to the extent necessary, as determined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to ensure that sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of individuals enrolled in the respective programs and to ensure that health care providers that furnish such items and services in good faith, but are unable to comply with one or more of such requirements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, may be reimbursed for such items and services and exempted from sanctions for such noncompliance, absent any determination of fraud or abuse. This authority took effect as of 6PM Eastern Standard Time on March 15, 2020, with a retroactive effective date of March 1, 2020. The emergency period will terminate, and waivers will no longer be available, upon termination of the public health emergency, including any extensions.

The State Medicaid agency (agency) seeks to implement the policies and procedures described below, which are different than the policies and procedures otherwise applied under the Medicaid state plan, during the period of the Presidential and Secretarial emergency declarations related to the COVID-19 outbreak (or any renewals thereof), or for any shorter period described below:

March 1 – June 30, 2020
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NOTE: States may not elect a period longer than the Presidential or Secretarial emergency declaration (or any renewal thereof). States may not propose changes on this template that restrict or limit payment, services, or eligibility, or otherwise burden beneficiaries and providers.

**Request for Waivers under Section 1135**

X  The agency seeks the following under section 1135(b)(1)(C) and/or section 1135(b)(5) of the Act:

- a.  X  SPA submission requirements – the agency requests modification of the requirement to submit the SPA by March 31, 2020, to obtain a SPA effective date during the first calendar quarter of 2020, pursuant to 42 CFR 430.20.
- b.  X  Public notice requirements – the agency requests waiver of public notice requirements that would otherwise be applicable to this SPA submission. These requirements may include those specified in 42 CFR 440.386 (Alternative Benefit Plans),

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This SPA is in addition to the NC Disaster Relief SPAs approved on May 18, 2020, August 18, 2020, and August 20, 2020, and does not supersede anything approved in those SPAs.

42 CFR 447.57(c) (premiums and cost sharing), and 42 CFR 447.205 (public notice of changes in statewide methods and standards for setting payment rates).

- c. X Tribal consultation requirements – the agency requests modification of tribal consultation timelines specified in North Carolina’s Medicaid state plan, as described below:

*Medicaid will notify the Tribe of all SPA changes on or before submission to CMS, and offer a telephonic meeting to discuss.*

**Section A – Eligibility**

- 1.        The agency furnishes medical assistance to the following optional groups of individuals described in section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii) or 1902(a)(10)(c) of the Act. This may include the new optional group described at section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XXIII) and 1902(ss) of the Act providing coverage for uninsured individuals.

*Include name of the optional eligibility group and applicable income and resource standard.*

- 2.        The agency furnishes medical assistance to the following populations of individuals described in section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XX) of the Act and 42 CFR 435.218:

- a.        All individuals who are described in section 1905(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XX)

Income standard: \_\_\_\_\_

-or-

- b.        Individuals described in the following categorical populations in section 1905(a) of the Act:

Income standard: \_\_\_\_\_

- 3.        The agency applies less restrictive financial methodologies to individuals excepted from financial methodologies based on modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) as follows.

Less restrictive income methodologies:

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Less restrictive resource methodologies:

[Empty rectangular box]

- 4.        The agency considers individuals who are evacuated from the state, who leave the state for medical reasons related to the disaster or public health emergency, or who are otherwise absent from the state due to the disaster or public health emergency and who intend to return to the state, to continue to be residents of the state under 42 CFR 435.403(j)(3).
- 5.        The agency provides Medicaid coverage to the following individuals living in the state, who are non-residents:

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- 6.        The agency provides for an extension of the reasonable opportunity period for non-citizens declaring to be in a satisfactory immigration status, if the non-citizen is making a good faith effort to resolve any inconsistencies or obtain any necessary documentation, or the agency is unable to complete the verification process within the 90-day reasonable opportunity period due to the disaster or public health emergency.

**Section B – Enrollment**

- 1.        The agency elects to allow hospitals to make presumptive eligibility determinations for the following additional state plan populations, or for populations in an approved section 1115 demonstration, in accordance with section 1902(a)(47)(B) of the Act and 42 CFR 435.1110, provided that the agency has determined that the hospital is capable of making such determinations.

*Please describe the applicable eligibility groups/populations and any changes to reasonable limitations, performance standards or other factors.*

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2.        The agency designates itself as a qualified entity for purposes of making presumptive eligibility determinations described below in accordance with sections 1920, 1920A, 1920B, and 1920C of the Act and 42 CFR Part 435 Subpart L.

*Please describe any limitations related to the populations included or the number of allowable PE periods.*

3.        The agency designates the following entities as qualified entities for purposes of making presumptive eligibility determinations or adds additional populations as described below in accordance with sections 1920, 1920A, 1920B, and 1920C of the Act and 42 CFR Part 435 Subpart L. Indicate if any designated entities are permitted to make presumptive eligibility determinations only for specified populations.

*Please describe the designated entities or additional populations and any limitations related to the specified populations or number of allowable PE periods.*

4.        The agency adopts a total of        months (not to exceed 12 months) continuous eligibility for children under age enter age        (not to exceed age 19) regardless of changes in circumstances in accordance with section 1902(e)(12) of the Act and 42 CFR 435.926.
5.        The agency conducts redeterminations of eligibility for individuals excepted from MAGI-based financial methodologies under 42 CFR 435.603(j) once every        months (not to exceed 12 months) in accordance with 42 CFR 435.916(b).
6.        The agency uses the following simplified application(s) to support enrollment in affected areas or for affected individuals (a copy of the simplified application(s) has been submitted to CMS).
- The agency uses a simplified paper application.
  - The agency uses a simplified online application.
  - The simplified paper or online application is made available for use in call-centers or other telephone applications in affected areas.

### Section C – Premiums and Cost Sharing

1.        The agency suspends deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and other cost sharing charges as follows:

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*Please describe whether the state suspends all cost sharing or suspends only specified deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, or other cost sharing charges for specified items and services or for specified eligibility groups consistent with 42 CFR 447.52(d) or for specified income levels consistent with 42 CFR 447.52(g).*

- 2.  The agency suspends enrollment fees, premiums and similar charges for:
  - a.  All beneficiaries
  - b.  The following eligibility groups or categorical populations:

*Please list the applicable eligibility groups or populations.*

- 3.  The agency allows waiver of payment of the enrollment fee, premiums and similar charges for undue hardship.

*Please specify the standard(s) and/or criteria that the state will use to determine undue hardship.*

**Section D – Benefits**

*Benefits:*

- 1.  The agency adds the following optional benefits in its state plan (include service descriptions, provider qualifications, and limitations on amount, duration or scope of the benefit):

- 2.  The agency makes the following adjustments to benefits currently covered in the state plan:

- 3.  The agency assures that newly added benefits or adjustments to benefits comply with all applicable statutory requirements, including the statewideness requirements found at 1902(a)(1), comparability requirements found at 1902(a)(10)(B), and free choice of provider requirements found at 1902(a)(23).

- 4.  Application to Alternative Benefit Plans (ABP). The state adheres to all ABP provisions in 42 CFR Part 440, Subpart C. This section only applies to states that have an approved ABP(s).

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- a. \_\_\_\_ The agency assures that these newly added and/or adjusted benefits will be made available to individuals receiving services under ABPs.
- b. \_\_\_\_ Individuals receiving services under ABPs will not receive these newly added and/or adjusted benefits, or will only receive the following subset:

*Please describe.*

*Telehealth:*

- 5. \_\_\_\_ The agency utilizes telehealth in the following manner, which may be different than outlined in the state’s approved state plan:

*Please describe.*

*Drug Benefit:*

- 6. \_\_\_\_ The agency makes the following adjustments to the day supply or quantity limit for covered outpatient drugs. The agency should only make this modification if its current state plan pages have limits on the amount of medication dispensed.

*Please describe the change in days or quantities that are allowed for the emergency period and for which drugs.*

- 7. \_\_\_\_ Prior authorization for medications is expanded by automatic renewal without clinical review, or time/quantity extensions.
- 8. \_\_\_\_ The agency makes the following payment adjustment to the professional dispensing fee when additional costs are incurred by the providers for delivery. States will need to supply documentation to justify the additional fees.

*Please describe the manner in which professional dispensing fees are adjusted.*

- 9. \_\_\_\_ The agency makes exceptions to their published Preferred Drug List if drug shortages occur. This would include options for covering a brand name drug product that is a multi-source drug if a generic drug option is not available.

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**Section E – Payments**

*Optional benefits described in Section D:*

1.  Newly added benefits described in Section D are paid using the following methodology:

a.  Published fee schedules –

Effective date (enter date of change): \_\_\_\_\_

Location (list published location): \_\_\_\_\_

b.  Other:

*Describe methodology here.*

*Increases to state plan payment methodologies:*

2.  The agency increases payment rates for the following services:

Inpatient and outpatient hospital services

a.  Payment increases are targeted based on the following criteria:

Separate methodologies described below for non-state owned, non-critical access hospitals; hospitals owned or controlled by the University of North Carolina Healthcare System; and critical access hospitals.

b. Payments are increased through:

i.  A supplemental payment or add-on within applicable upper payment limits:

**Non-State Owned, Non-Critical Access Hospitals (“PPS” Hospitals)**

Effective from March 1, 2020 through 6/30/2020, calculate a monthly “deficit payment adjustment” to ensure hospitals are paid up to their full Medicaid costs as **projected** in the FFY 2020 North Carolina supplemental payment “MRI/GAP Plan”, after accounting for substantially lower-than expected **actual** FFY 2020 claims revenue. Full FFY2020 Medicaid costs as projected in the MRI/GAP Plan are calculated pursuant to the existing State Plan methodology

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by using FFY2018 Medicaid costs trended forward to FFY2020. *For each PPS hospital, perform the following calculation:*

Inpatient Services

1. Identify monthly deficit payment reflected in approved FFY 2020 MRI/GAP Plan, calculated as the difference between FFY2020 projected Medicaid costs and base payments, divided by 12.
2. Identify monthly deficit payment taking into account COVID impact, calculated as the difference between FFY2020 projected Medicaid costs in FFY2020 MRI/GAP Plan, divided by 12, and *actual FFY 2020 claims payments for the applicable month* as identified in the State's Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), adjusted for an Incurred But Not Reported (IBNR) completion factor based on historical claims experience.
3. Calculate deficit payment adjustment. The deficit payment amount will not be greater than 100% of the difference between Step 2 and Step 1.

**Hospitals Owned or Controlled by the University of North Carolina Health Care System (UNCHCS)**

Effective from March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020, calculate a monthly payment adjustment for *hospitals owned or controlled by the University of North Carolina Healthcare System*. The monthly payment adjustment for UNCHCS hospitals represents the difference between Medicaid inpatient and outpatient paid claims as projected in the FFY2020 MRI/GAP Plan and actual FFY2020 paid claims and is calculated as follows:

Inpatient Services

1. Identify monthly Medicaid inpatient claims payments for each applicable hospital based on projected annual FFY 2020 inpatient Medicaid payments divided by 12. Annual FFY2020 Medicaid payments as projected in the MRI/GAP Plan are calculated by using FFY2018 Medicaid payments trended forward to FFY2020.
2. Identify actual FFY 2020 Medicaid inpatient claims payments for the applicable month as identified in the State's Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), adjusted for an IBNR completion factor based on historical claims experience.
3. Calculate payment adjustment. The payment adjustment will not be greater than 100% of the difference between Step 2 and Step 1.

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Outpatient Services

1. Identify monthly Medicaid outpatient claims payments for each applicable hospital based on projected annual FFY 2020 outpatient Medicaid payments divided by 12. Annual FFY2020 Medicaid payments as projected in the MRI/GAP Plan are calculated by using FFY2018 Medicaid payments trended forward to FFY2020.
2. Identify actual FFY 2020 Medicaid outpatient claims payments for the applicable month as identified in the State’s Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), adjusted for an IBNR completion factor based on historical claims experience.
3. Calculate payment adjustment. The payment adjustment will not be greater than 100% of the difference between Step 2 and Step 1.

Notes:

Payment amounts will be calculated monthly, and paid in regular installments.

The State intends to make all other payments to hospitals pursuant to the existing State Plan (Base Payments, UPL Payments, Deficit Payments) based on the amounts included in the approved FFY 2020 MRI/GAP Plan.

The MRI/GAP Plan is the State’s hospital supplemental payment model which contains the data and calculations necessary to make annual payments to hospitals (Base Payments, UPL Payments, Deficit Payments). Deficit payments are payments to hospitals to cover the difference between Medicaid base payments and Medicaid costs.

- ii.  An increase to rates as described below.

Rates are increased:

Uniformly by the following percentage: \_\_\_\_\_

Through a modification to published fee schedules –

Effective date (enter date of change): \_\_\_\_\_

Location (list published location): \_\_\_\_\_

Up to the Medicare payments for equivalent services.

By the following factors:

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*Please describe.*

*Payment for services delivered via telehealth:*

- 3.  For the duration of the emergency, the state authorizes payments for telehealth services that:
  - a.  Are not otherwise paid under the Medicaid state plan;
  - b.  Differ from payments for the same services when provided face to face;
  - c.  Differ from current state plan provisions governing reimbursement for telehealth;

*Describe telehealth payment variation.*

- d.  Include payment for ancillary costs associated with the delivery of covered services via telehealth, (if applicable), as follows:
  - i.  Ancillary cost associated with the originating site for telehealth is incorporated into fee-for-service rates.
  - ii.  Ancillary cost associated with the originating site for telehealth is separately reimbursed as an administrative cost by the state when a Medicaid service is delivered.

*Other:*

- 4.  Other payment changes:

*Please describe.*

**Section F – Post-Eligibility Treatment of Income**

- 1.  The state elects to modify the basic personal needs allowance for institutionalized individuals. The basic personal needs allowance is equal to one of the following amounts:
  - a.  The individual’s total income
  - b.  300 percent of the SSI federal benefit rate
  - c.  Other reasonable amount: \_\_\_\_\_

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- 2.      The state elects a new variance to the basic personal needs allowance. (Note: Election of this option is not dependent on a state electing the option described the option in F.1. above.)

The state protects amounts exceeding the basic personal needs allowance for individuals who have the following greater personal needs:

*Please describe the group or groups of individuals with greater needs and the amount(s) protected for each group or groups.*

**Section G – Other Policies and Procedures Differing from Approved Medicaid State Plan /Additional Information**

**PRA Disclosure Statement**

*According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0938-1148 (Expires 03/31/2021). The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 to 2 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. Your response is required to receive a waiver under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act. All responses are public and will be made available on the CMS web site. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: CMS, 7500 Security Boulevard, Attn: PRA Reports Clearance Officer, Mail Stop C4-26-05, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850. \*\*\*CMS Disclosure\*\*\* Please do not send applications, claims, payments, medical records or any documents containing sensitive information to the PRA Reports Clearance Office. Please note that any correspondence not pertaining to the information collection burden approved under the associated OMB control number listed on this form will not be reviewed, forwarded, or retained. If you have questions or concerns regarding where to submit your documents, please contact the Centers for Medicaid & CHIP Services at 410-786-3870.*

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