

APPENDIX K: Emergency Preparedness and Response and COVID-19 Addendum

Background:

This standalone appendix may be utilized by the state during emergency situations to request amendments to its approved waiver, to multiple approved waivers in the state, and/or to all approved waivers in the state. It includes actions that states can take under the existing Section 1915(c) home and community-based waiver authority in order to respond to an emergency. Other activities may require the use of various other authorities such as the Section 1115 demonstrations or the Section 1135 authorities.ⁱ This appendix may be applied retroactively as needed by the state. Public notice requirements normally applicable under 1915(c) do not apply to information contained in this Appendix.

Appendix K-1: General Information

General Information:

- A. State: North Carolina
- B. Waiver Title(s): Community Alternatives Program for Children (CAP/C)
- C. Control Number(s): NC.4141.R06.09

D. Type of Emergency (The state may check more than one box):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pandemic or Epidemic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural Disaster
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Security Emergency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify):

E. Brief Description of Emergency. *In no more than one paragraph each*, briefly describe the: 1) nature of emergency; 2) number of individuals affected and the state’s mechanism to identify individuals at risk; 3) roles of state, local and other entities involved in approved waiver operations; and 4) expected changes needed to service delivery methods, if applicable. The state should provide this information for each emergency checked if those emergencies affect different geographic areas and require different changes to the waiver.

COVID-19 pandemic. This application is additive to the previously approved Appendix K. The purpose of this action is to implement direct care worker wage increases specified in the HCBS Section 9817 ARP Spending Plan with a retroactive effective

F. Proposed Effective Date: Start Date: March 13, 2020 **Anticipated End Date:** Through six months following the end of the Public Health Emergency

G. Description of Transition Plan.

All activities will take place in response to the impact of COVID-19 as efficiently and effectively as possible based upon the complexity of the change. All wage increases will be included in the renewed waiver amendment.

H. Geographic Areas Affected:

These actions will apply to all eligible waiver participants impacted by the COVID-19 virus.

I. Description of State Disaster Plan (if available) Reference to external documents is acceptable:

N/A

Appendix K-2: Temporary or Emergency-Specific Amendment to Approved Waiver

Temporary or Emergency-Specific Amendment to Approved Waiver:

These are changes that, while directly related to the state’s response to an emergency situation, require amendment to the approved waiver document. These changes are time limited and tied specifically to individuals impacted by the emergency. Permanent or long-ranging changes will need to be incorporated into the main appendices of the waiver, via an amendment request in the waiver management system (WMS) upon advice from CMS.

a. ___ Access and Eligibility:

i. ___ Temporarily increase the cost limits for entry into the waiver.

[Provide explanation of changes and specify the temporary cost limit.]

ii. ___ Temporarily modify additional targeting criteria.

[Explanation of changes]

b. ___ Services

i. ___ Temporarily modify service scope or coverage.

[Complete Section A- Services to be Added/Modified During an Emergency.]

ii. ___ Temporarily exceed service limitations (including limits on sets of services as described in Appendix C-4) or requirements for amount, duration, and prior authorization to address health and welfare issues presented by the emergency.

[Explanation of changes]

iii. ___ Temporarily add services to the waiver to address the emergency situation (for example, emergency counseling; heightened case management to address emergency needs; emergency medical supplies and equipment; individually directed goods and services; ancillary services to establish temporary residences for dislocated waiver enrollees; necessary technology; emergency evacuation transportation outside of the scope of non-emergency transportation or transportation already provided through the waiver).

[Complete Section A-Services to be Added/Modified During an Emergency]

iv. ___ Temporarily expand setting(s) where services may be provided (e.g. hotels, shelters, schools, churches). Note for respite services only, the state should indicate any facility-based settings and indicate whether room and board is included:

[Explanation of modification, and advisement if room and board is included in the respite rate]:

v. ___ Temporarily provide services in out of state settings (if not already permitted in the state's approved waiver). [Explanation of changes]

c. ___ Temporarily permit payment for services rendered by family caregivers or legally responsible individuals if not already permitted under the waiver. Indicate the services to which this will apply and the safeguards to ensure that individuals receive necessary services as authorized in the plan of care, and the procedures that are used to ensure that payments are made for services rendered.

d. ___ Temporarily modify provider qualifications (for example, expand provider pool, temporarily modify or suspend licensure and certification requirements).

i. ___ Temporarily modify provider qualifications.

[Provide explanation of changes, list each service affected, list the provider type, and the changes in provider qualifications.]

ii. Temporarily modify provider types.

[Provide explanation of changes, list each service affected, and the changes in the provider type for each service].

iii. Temporarily modify licensure or other requirements for settings where waiver services are furnished.

[Provide explanation of changes, description of facilities to be utilized and list each service provided in each facility utilized.]

e. Temporarily modify processes for level of care evaluations or re-evaluations (within regulatory requirements). [Describe]

f. X Temporarily increase payment rates.

[Provide an explanation for the increase. List the provider types, rates by service, and specify whether this change is based on a rate development method that is different from the current approved waiver (and if different, specify and explain the rate development method). If the rate varies by provider, list the rate by service and by provider.]

The services provided by direct care workers as described in the HCBS Section 9817 ARP Spending Plan and as directed by the North Carolina 2021 Appropriations Act, Senate Bill 105. These rate increases will be effective March 1, 2022 and through six months following the end of the Public Health Emergency or approval of an amended waiver application.

The General Assembly in North Carolina authorized legislation and funding to support the increase in provider rates for services delivered by direct care workers with the intention of supporting increased wages of these workers. Senate Bill 105 did not provide specific authority to enforce providers to pass on a percentage of the rate to the direct care worker. Based on the legislative intent of the rate increases, NC Medicaid **strongly encouraged** providers to distribute no less than 80% of funds received to increase wages of direct care workers identified using the criteria defined by the department within the next practicable pay period, not to exceed 45 days. This wage increase is intended to be in addition to the rate of pay each employee was receiving as of Oct. 1, 2021 (excluding any temporary wage increases made in response to COVID-19). An announcement to providers on the management of the rate increase can be found in the published [Medicaid Bulletin](#).

The State identified the services in the 1915(c) waivers delivered by direct care workers and determined equitable increases to each fee schedule. These increases support an approximate

\$1.50-\$2 per hour increase in direct care worker wages. The rate increases were calibrated to a \$0.54 per 15-minute unit equivalent. The \$0.54 was derived by dividing the funding allocated by the general assembly by the historical number of 15-minute equivalent units of direct care delivered across the various HCBS services. For services with unit definitions that differ from 15-minute units (i.e. per diem or hourly services), the \$0.54 was translated into an equivalent rate add-on based on the assumed number of 15-minute units of direct care delivered during the defined unit. The reasons for the differences in the rates are listed below.

- 1) The \$0.54 increase was developed for 1:1 services. In instances when this was applied to congregate care settings, the increase was adjusted to reflect that one direct care worker may be providing services to more than participant concurrently.
- 2) The respite care in home nursing rates were increased in alignment with specific State legislation, which required increases in private duty nursing services from \$9.90 to \$11.25.
This change was separate from the direct care worker increases impacting other PCS services.

The impacted services and fee increases are identified below and are for FFS providers only.

The impacted services and fee increases are identified below. Respite Care – Institutional: \$11.52 per diem
In-Home Aide/Personal Care Assistance Services: \$0.54 per 15-minute unit
Pediatric Personal Care: \$0.54 per 15-minute unit
Pediatric Personal Care Respite: \$0.54 per 15-minute unit
Congregate CAP/C Personal Care/Nurse Aide Services: \$0.49 per 15-minute unit
Respite – In-Home Aide: \$0.54 per 15-minute unit
Respite Care – In-Home Nurse: \$1.35 per 15-minute unit

individual(s) responsible for person-centered service plan development, including qualifications.

[Describe any modifications including qualifications of individuals responsible for service plan development, and address Participant Safeguards. Also include strategies to ensure that services are received as authorized.]

h. ___ Temporarily modify incident reporting requirements, medication management or other participant safeguards to ensure individual health and welfare, and to account for emergency circumstances. [Explanation of changes]

i. ___ Temporarily allow for payment for services for the purpose of supporting waiver participants in an acute care hospital or short-term institutional stay when necessary supports (including communication and intensive personal care) are not available in that setting, or when the individual requires those services for communication and behavioral stabilization, and such services are not covered in such settings.

[Specify the services.]

j. ___ Temporarily include retainer payments to address emergency related issues.

[Describe the circumstances under which such payments are authorized and applicable limits on their duration. Retainer payments are available for habilitation and personal care only.]

k. ___ Temporarily institute or expand opportunities for self-direction.

[Provide an overview and any expansion of self-direction opportunities including a list of services that may be self-directed and an overview of participant safeguards.]

l. ___ Increase Factor C.

[Explain the reason for the increase and list the current approved Factor C as well as the proposed revised Factor C]

m. ___ Other Changes Necessary [For example, any changes to billing processes, use of contracted entities or any other changes needed by the State to address imminent needs of individuals in the waiver program]. [Explanation of changes]



Appendix K Addendum: COVID-19 Pandemic Response

1. HCBS Regulations

- a. Not comply with the HCBS settings requirement at 42 CFR 441.301(c)(4)(vi)(D) that individuals are able to have visitors of their choosing at any time, for settings added after March 17, 2014, to minimize the spread of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Services

- a. Add an electronic method of service delivery (e.g., telephonic) allowing services to continue to be provided remotely in the home setting for:
 - i. Case management
 - ii. Personal care services that only require verbal cueing
 - iii. In-home habilitation
 - iv. Monthly monitoring (i.e., in order to meet the reasonable indication of need for services requirement in 1915(c) waivers).
 - v. Other *[Describe]:*



- b. Add home-delivered meals
- c. Add medical supplies, equipment, and appliances (over and above that which is in the state plan)
- d. Add Assistive Technology

3. Conflict of Interest: The state is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic personnel crisis by authorizing case management entities to provide direct services. Therefore, the case management entity qualifies under 42 CFR 441.301(c)(1)(vi) as the only willing and qualified entity.

- a. Current safeguards authorized in the approved waiver will apply to these entities.
- b. Additional safeguards listed below will apply to these entities.



4. Provider Qualifications

- a. Allow spouses and parents of minor children to provide personal care services
- b. Allow a family member to be paid to render services to an individual.
- c. Allow other practitioners in lieu of approved providers within the waiver. *[Indicate the providers and their qualifications]*



- d. Modify service providers for home-delivered meals to allow for additional providers,

including non-traditional providers.

5. Processes

- a. Allow an extension for reassessments and reevaluations for up to one year past the due date.
- b. Allow the option to conduct evaluations, assessments, and person-centered service planning meetings virtually/remotely in lieu of face-to-face meetings.
- c. Adjust prior approval/authorization elements approved in waiver.
- d. Adjust assessment requirements
- e. Add an electronic method of signing off on required documents such as the person-centered service plan.

Contact Person(s)

A. The Medicaid agency representative with whom CMS should communicate regarding the request:

First Name: Melanie
Last Name: Bush
Title: Chief Administration Officer
Agency: DHHS-Division of Health Benefits
Address 1: 1985 Umstead Drive
Address 2: 2501 Mail Service Center
City: Raleigh
State: North Carolina
Zip Code: 27609-2501
Telephone: (919) 855-4182
E-mail: Melanie.Bush@dhhs.nc.gov
Fax Number: (919) 733-6608

B. If applicable, the State operating agency representative with whom CMS should communicate regarding the waiver is:

First Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
Agency: Click or tap here to enter text.
Address 1: Click or tap here to enter text.
Address 2: Click or tap here to enter text.
City: Click or tap here to enter text.
State: Click or tap here to enter text.
Zip Code: Click or tap here to enter text.
Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.
E-mail: Click or tap here to enter text.
Fax Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Authorizing Signature

Signature: /S/

Date: 4-29-2022

State Medicaid Director or Designee

First Name: Dave
Last Name: Richard
Title: Deputy Secretary
Agency: DHHS-Division of Health Benefits
Address 1: 1985 Umstead Drive
Address 2: 2501 Mail Service Center
City: Raleigh
State: North Carolina
Zip Code: 27609--2501
Telephone: (919) 855-4101
E-mail: Dave.Richard@dhhs.nc.gov
Fax Number:

Section A---Services to be Added/Modified During an Emergency

Complete for each service added during a time of emergency. For services in the approved waiver that the state is temporarily modifying, enter the entire service definition and highlight the change. State laws, regulations and policies referenced in the specification should be readily available to CMS upon request through the Medicaid agency or the operating agency (if applicable).

Service Specification				
Service Title:				
<i>Complete this part for a renewal application or a new waiver that replaces an existing waiver. Select one:</i>				
Service Definition (Scope):				
Specify applicable (if any) limits on the amount, frequency, or duration of this service:				
Provider Specifications				
Provider Category(s) <i>(check one or both):</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual. List types:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agency. List the types of agencies:
Specify whether the service may be provided by <i>(check each that applies):</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legally Responsible Person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relative/Legal Guardian
Provider Qualifications <i>(provide the following information for each type of provider):</i>				
Provider Type:	License <i>(specify)</i>	Certificate <i>(specify)</i>	Other Standard <i>(specify)</i>	
Verification of Provider Qualifications				
Provider Type:	Entity Responsible for Verification:		Frequency of Verification	
Service Delivery Method				
Service Delivery Method <i>(check each that applies):</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participant-directed as specified in Appendix E	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provider managed



ⁱ Numerous changes that the state may want to make may necessitate authority outside of the scope of section 1915(c) authority. States interested in changes to administrative claiming or changes that require section 1115 or section 1135 authority should engage CMS in a discussion as soon as possible. Some examples may include: (a) changes to administrative activities, such as the establishment of a hotline; or (b) suspension of general Medicaid rules that are not addressed under section 1915(c) such as payment rules or eligibility rules or suspension of provisions of section 1902(a) to which 1915(c) is typically bound.