

### **Disaster and Emergency Authority Change**

Montana Behavioral Health Severe Disabling Mental Illness Home and Community Based Services waiver MT (MT 0455.R02.07) and the Montana Big Sky Home and Community Based waiver (MT-0148.R06.04) seek rate increases for Residential Habilitation services.

Montana proposes to provide temporary increase in rates to \$104/day for adult residential services provided in an assisted living facility or adult foster home, \$168.56 for specialized adult residential care facility, and \$206.58 for group homes.

### **Reasons for Temporary Change**

Factors that influenced the rate increase include: increased cost of operations to manage response to COVID-19 such as supplying Personal Protective Equipment and other related supplies; alignment with other congregate care setting rates; accounting for additional risks for providers; and the necessity to expand the provider pool. The proposed rate is an average increase of 61% per day, resulting in assisted living rates set at less than one-half of the statewide average for nursing facilities. The change is being made to promote waiver members access to assisted living services. Montana currently has insufficient access to these services due to the historically low rates. This reality is exacerbated by the increased risk, expectations and costs for residential habilitation providers during the public health emergency. Increasing access to assisted living services will support Montana Medicaid members ability to live a quality life outside of an institution. Ensuring members have access to residential habilitation facilities is a necessary component of Montanan’s long-term care continuum. This continuum has been put at significant risk of disruption as a result of declining provider availability due to the COVID-19 pandemic

### **Proposal**

Submit a change to the SDMI HCBS Waiver and the Big Sky Waiver to permanently retain the provider rate increase.

### **Reasons for Proposal**

The assisted living rate has historically been a low percentage of other congregate care settings. The public health emergency has identified the need for increased planning and emergency response capabilities in our congregate settings, increasing the expected operating costs of assisted living facilities. It is our recommendation that the rate increase be pursued to promote the health and safety of Medicaid waiver members living in assisted living settings.