



**Greg Gianforte, Governor**

**Adam Meier, Director**

Date: August 27, 2021  
To: Big Sky Waiver Stakeholders  
From: Marie Matthews, State Medicaid Director  
Subject: **1915(c) Home and Community Based Montana Medicaid Big Sky Waiver for the Elderly and Adults with Physical Disabilities Amendment**

We are sending this memo to invite comment from stakeholders regarding an upcoming amendment to the 1915(c) Home and Community Based Montana Medicaid Big Sky Waiver for the Elderly and Adults with Physical Disabilities. The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will submit the amendment for Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approval on or before September 30, 2021, for an effective date of January 1, 2022.

The Big Sky Waiver serves individuals at all stages of life who are determined to be aged, blind, or physically disabled. The Waiver supports eligible participants, who would otherwise be institutionalized, maintain the ability to live at home and in their communities, advancing the participant's autonomy, control, dignity, and independence. The services delivered within the scope of Big Sky Waiver are made available through the Senior and Long Term Care Division of DPHHS, in partnership with agencies committed to delivering quality long term services and supports to all Montanans.

Adult Residential Rate Increases (Administrative Rule of Montana (ARM) 37.85.105)

DPHHS has determined daily rate increases for assisted living, specialized assisted living for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and group homes that serve elderly and disabled members are appropriate to address and remedy identified barriers to access and quality service delivery for elderly and disabled Montanans across the state. The congregate care services identified are necessary to serve the high needs of Montana Medicaid residents:

- Residential Habilitation - Assisted Living Facilities and Adult Foster Homes (billing code T2031) will increase to \$104.00 maximum per day from \$78.80 maximum rate per day.
- Residential Habilitation - TBI/Adult Residential (code T2016) will increase to \$165.77 per day from \$109.78 per day.
- Residential Habilitation - Elderly Disabled Group Home (code T2016) will increase to \$206.58 per day from \$158.91 per day.

New Service Proposal

DPHHS has also determined that residents exhibiting adverse behaviors, or in need of enhanced memory care, prompts the need for the establishment of a new Big Sky Waiver service. Adverse behaviors are often compounded by complex diagnoses and unique disease progression. Behavior management intervention within assisted living facilities promotes a Medicaid

resident's greater ability to age in place within their preferred setting and community. A resident's ability to age in place maintains consistency, interpersonal relationships, emotional security, and dignity.

Historically, it has been found that when residents exhibit adverse behaviors, such as verbal and physical aggression, wandering, elopement, frequent falls, and impulsive behaviors and/or actions, assisted living facilities are often compelled to issue residents an involuntary 30-day eviction notice. If discharges are rendered successful, residents often are inappropriately hospitalized, placed in skilled nursing facilities, or settings specializing in mental health intervention until stabilized.

The name and requested rate for this new service are: Residential Habilitation - Assisted Living Facilities and Adult Foster Homes - Behavior Management (code T2031), reimbursed at \$141.00 per day.

The current Big Sky Waiver fee schedule can be found at <https://medicaidprovider.mt.gov/28#184572515-fee-schedules--elderly-and-physically-disabled-waiver>. The draft Big Sky Waiver amendment is available for review at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/SLTC/csb>.

The state, upon request, will make available hard copies of the draft waiver amendment.

Your questions and comments can be submitted during the public comment period, **from August 29, 2021 through September 27, 2021**, addressed to: Mary Eve Kulawik, Medicaid State Plan Amendment and Waiver Coordinator, at (406) 444-2584 or [mkulawik@mt.gov](mailto:mkulawik@mt.gov); or Director's Office, PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the Medicaid program.