

April 2024: *The Latest in LTSS*



In a collaborative effort, leadership members from various agencies in our region have partnered to compile and distribute streamlined communication to our stakeholders about steps being taken to address challenges occurring in Colorado's Long-Term Services and Supports system. Our main goal is to keep you informed with relevant updates through these newsletters at least once per month, but we will provide more frequent updates should additional urgent information need quick distribution.

We invite you to actively share this information with your stakeholders, ensuring widespread distribution. All issues of this newsletter can be found on the TRE website [here](#).

The Latest

Partners working with people seeking and receiving LTSS services continue to hear about challenges with disruption to those services. Examples of scenarios being shared are below with information on how best to mitigate or interact with them.

- Documents submitted but not showing up in systems – People in services and their caregivers are reporting to County DHS offices and CMAs that they have submitted requested documentation. However, staff at DHS do not see any indication of those submittals. It has been determined that a large number of these document submissions were completed in Peak Pro rather than sending them to the DHS office.
 - Issues With Peak Pro Submission
 - No alert sent to DHS that the submission has occurred
 - Requires separate login from DHS staff that can impact timeliness
 - DHS offices working on processes to ensure Peak Pro is tracked
 - Solution
 - Encourage Members/People in Services to submit documents directly to DHS via emails indicated below instead of or in addition to submitting them through Peak Pro.
 - El Paso County DHS Contact Information
 - Long Term Care and Adult Financial Contacts HCBS Waiver, PACE, and Nursing Facility:
 - Inquiries- DHSLongTermCareLiaison@elpasoco.com
 - If you need to know what kind of application to submit
 - If you need to submit verifications after the application has been submitted but has not been assigned to a technician
 - What the status of an application or verification is
 - Who the case is assigned to
 - Any questions and don't know who to contact
 - Submit an application- DHSAgeingandAdult@elpasoco.com

- Approved LTC NF, HCBS, and PACE cases- dhsadultmaongoing@elpasoco.com
 - Phone: 719-444-5500
 - Option 1- Approved Ongoing Cases
 - Option 2- General questions, inquires, or status of an application
 - Option 6- Spanish Speaking
 - General Call Center Line: 719-636-0000
 - Medicaid and SNAP Combo Cases: Call Center 719-444-5124
 - Medicaid ONLY (Not LTC): Call Center 719-444-8200
- Pueblo County DHS Contact Information
 - Long Term Care Contacts HCBS Waiver, PACE, and Nursing Facility: dssltc@pueblocounty.us
 - Medicaid, SNAP, and Adult Financial: afinquiries@pueblocounty.us
 - Medicaid and SNAP Combo Cases: apinquiries@pueblocounty.us Call Center 719-253-7850
 - Medicaid, SNAP and Colorado Works: cwtechs@pueblocounty.us
- PAR Issues – People in Services and Providers are reporting continued challenges with PARs creating issues with billing and payments.
 - System issues creating PAR Challenges
 - Streamlined Eligibility continues to create issues with PARs because CBMS shows approval dates but these are not transferring to the Bridge and CCM. As a result, TRE staff are unable to process the PAR. There is often a fix once the issue is identified, however, TRE staff must submit a ticket to get it resolved. *Providers should submit information regarding PARs not paying or not being received to the TRE email address TREbillingissue@trejorg;*
 - Delays in renewing PARs can occur when there is difficulty scheduling annual assessments and service plan reviews with Members/Guardians. *TRE staff will inform providers when this is the cause of the issue.*
 - Staffing challenges at TRE have created backlogs in annual assessments and service plan reviews completed timely. *TRE will be hiring 30 temporary staff to assist with specific activities (not full case management responsibilities) in July to help relieve this backlog. We will report on progress at our monthly Provider meetings.*
 - Breaks in Financial Eligibility for a Member. *TRE is meeting regularly with county DHS offices to resolve eligibility breaks. HCPF has also implemented strategies to halt these breaks in eligibility.*
- Roadblocks for Transitions from one Waiver to Another – Transition of a Member from one waiver to another waiver can often take a long time, creating roadblocks to needed services.
- Lack of Timely Response from Service Coordinator to Calls, Emails, etc. – Members, Caregivers, and Providers are reporting it is difficult to reach a Member’s Service Coordinator and calls are not returned in a timely manner.
 - System Issues Impacting Response Time
 - Staff turnover, staff recruitment challenges, and high caseloads – *TRE has expanded recruitment efforts to include job fairs, staffing agency recruitment, and university/college outreach. As of June, these efforts are producing improved recruitment and hiring. TRE will begin to share information on our progress with staffing in July 2024.*
 - Calls on an issue are being made to multiple TRE staff requiring each to respond and adding to the volume of workload being managed by each staff – TRE encourages

Members, Caregivers, and Providers to contact the assigned Service Coordinator/TRE Staff and when needed reach out to their supervisor, manager, and director when a response is not received. *TRE is working to make a contact list available that will provide this information more readily to those who need it.*

What Members Should Know

- Submit financial eligibility documents to identified DHS email addresses above in place of or in addition to submitting them in Peak Pro. Local DHS offices are defining processes to ensure they are aware of documents uploaded there as well.
- Visit the HCPF Landing Page for updates or to send an escalation [here](#).
- If members are not currently receiving OCL and HCPF emails, they can [sign up here](#).

What Providers Should Know

If a provider has an issue with billing and is seeking support from TRE, please use the following to submit those requests:

- Submit the requests to this single email address TREbillingissue@tre.org - (versus sending your request to numerous individual staff).
- Please send the information below to document your issues and attach it to your email, providing the following for EACH person: (submit all individuals requiring follow-up in a single email).
 - Member's First and Last Name
 - Medicaid ID
 - Service you are billing for
 - Units billed
 - Billing code used
 - Billing modifier used
 - Dates being billed and denied
 - Billing Denial Code/reasoning
- HCPF has reinstated the allowance of virtual meetings to obtain LOCs and other typically in-person activities. TRE will be utilizing this strategy as needed.
- Provider referrals from TRE will now go out to all Providers across El Paso, Park, Pueblo, and Teller counties and will include PASAs and SEP Providers. Providers should review the referral to ensure they are an approved provider for the area in which the person lives, and the services indicated. It is encouraged for all providers to consider becoming approved in all 4 counties of our region. You will still be able to select only the individuals you choose to serve.

State Level Action

Health Care Policy and Financing has announced several strategies to address ongoing issues with the CCM and eligibility. There are both short-term and long-term strategies being explored.

- **CCM Interventions:** HCPF has brought the leadership of AssureCare to Colorado to meet with and learn from CMA staff the issues being experienced with the CCM. These meetings are being held 3/11-3/15 and a report on the next steps and identified solutions are expected by 3/18. HCPF has said they will be disseminating a Known Issues Tracker very soon but this has not been released as of 6/17/24.
- **Protecting Coverage for LTSS Members:** HCPF is pursuing several solutions through several system and process changes to mitigate payment delays for providers and ease the backlog and capacity challenges experienced by counties and CMAs.
- **Expedited Backlog Processing:** HCPF will expedite an eligibility system change to process the backlog of Level Of Care (LOC) Certification entries.
- **Preventing Termination During Processing:** HCPF will implement a system change to prevent financial eligibility terminations for missing the LOC while the LOC is being processed.
- **Temporarily Pausing Terminations:** HCPF will temporarily pause terminations for all reasons for LTSS members for two months past the member's original termination date, unless the termination is for a member who has moved out of state or has passed away. This system change will replace the 60-day extension for the renewal period for Long-Term Care (LTC), individuals on Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) and Buy-In recipients who have yet to return their renewal packet on time. Instead, the system will apply a two-month extension for **all** denial reasons. A notice will be sent to members to let them know they have a two-month extension.
- **Reinstating Eligibility:** Until the eligibility system change described above can be implemented, HCPF will continue to reinstate eligibility for all LTSS members when their eligibility is set to end, like what occurred in February 2024 when HCPF reinstated eligibility for LTSS members after a system update unintentionally terminated their coverage. Once HCPF reinstates a member's eligibility, they will remain active until their case can be properly processed through the two eligibility system changes described above.
- **Monitoring and Reversing Inappropriate Terminations:** If the member's eligibility is still pending due to missing documentation or verifications after the two-month extension, county workers may manually implement a pause by applying a Good Faith Extension, further delaying termination until the member's case can be fully reviewed. HCPF reissued guidance to county workers on the Good Faith Extension on March 1, 2024, and will be monitoring this closely to watch for any inappropriate terminations and work to reverse those identified.
- **ARPA funding to CMAs** - to aid with CCM clean up and data entry needs.
- **Prior Authorization Request (PAR) Extension:** HCPF will extend PARs for LTSS eligible members who do not have a current PAR in the claims payment system for an additional year.
- **Benefit Plan Extension:** HCPF will extend the member's current benefit plan (e.g., HCBS BI-Brain Injury) for an additional year. This will allow HCPF's claims payment system to continue to pay for services if necessary, information has not been provided through the HCPF Bridge system.
 - If providers are unable to locate a PAR in the Provider Portal, providers should verify eligibility for the LTSS benefits and provide services as they have traditionally provided

and submit a claim for services, so HCPF has a timely record of the service being billed. Providers can also call 844-235-2387 for breaks in PARS and the Bridge.

Local Action

- Communication Workgroup monthly meetings
- Active Participation in State Level problem-solving
- Monthly Provider Meetings facilitated by TRE
- Collaboration across Partners/Stakeholders
- Provider/Member Portal in progress to streamline processes and access to status of services – anticipated launch is 7/1/24.
- Commitments to staff for support and well-being

Resources and What You Can Do

- HCPF Website: Stabilizing Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) – This landing page can be accessed by Members, Providers, CMAs and other Partners to learn about the status of efforts and remedies. You can also find all previous communications from HCPF here. [Stabilizing Long-Term Services and Supports \(LTSS\) | Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing](#)
- Sign up for OCL and HCPF Communications
 - If you are not currently receiving these emails, [sign up here](#). [See a list](#) of all HCPF newsletters you can subscribe to.
- As the Regional Accountable Entity (RAE), Colorado Community Health Alliance is responsible for reducing barriers that members experience when accessing care. CCHA services are part of an individual's **Health First Colorado benefits**, so there is **no cost to members**.

CCHA Referrals

- Referral form can be found here:
 - Online: www.cchacares.com/for-providers/ccha-provider-support/

Call CCHA Member Support:

- **Region 7** (El Paso, Park and Teller counties)
 - Email: R7Referral@cchacares.com
 - Local: 719-598-1540
 - Toll free: 1-855-627-4685

Need printed resources for your members? CCHA can help. Visit this link for educational materials, flyers, and posters available to providers at no cost: [CCHA | Free Educational Materials](#)

- Follow TRE on its primary social media platform, Facebook, [here](#)

What The Acronyms Mean

- Acronym Guide: [Office Of Community Living Acronym Glossary | Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing](#)
- Member = person in services
- CCM = Care and Case Management system (statewide Member health record). This replaced the Benefits Utilization System (BUS)
- HCPF = Health Care Policy and Financing
- CMA = Case Management Agencies. Formerly CCBs and SEPs.
- CMRD = Case Management Redesign
- DSA = Direct Service Area. This is how CMRD designated CMAs. TRE works with both DSA 11 (El Paso, Park, and Teller Counties) and DSA 12 (Pueblo County).
- LTSS = Long Term Services and Supports. Also known as HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) or LTC (Long Term Care).