Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

Pennsylvania's 1115 Waiver Application: An Opportunity to Support Children's Health in 200 Words

Population Health Sciences

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The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PA DHS) recently posted its Section 1115 Medicaid demonstration waiver application, "Bridges to Success: Keystones of Health for Pennsylvania," for public comment. Section 1115 waivers allow states to conduct experimental projects that investigate approaches to better serve Medicaid enrollees.

PolicyLab has responded to the public comment opportunity, working with our researchers who are experts in nutrition security, addressing social needs in health care and reducing administrative burden in safety net programs. We were thrilled to see that the application includes multi-year continuous Medicaid coverage for children under 6 years of age, which other states recently introduced and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) advocated for together with other pediatric organizations across Pennsylvania. Multi-year continuous coverage ensures that children retain health coverage in their vital early years despite household income fluctuations and administrative challenges. It offers many benefits for children and families, improving health and health equity.

The application also includes important supports related to food and nutrition, housing, and reentry from correctional facilities. We commend the inclusion of people who are pregnant or postpartum as a group eligible for these supports.

Additionally in our comments, we offer PA DHS several points to consider for its implementation plan regarding screening for social needs in pediatrics, meeting children's nutritional needs and leveraging existing partnerships to connect Medicaid enrollees to nutrition assistance.

We look forward to working with PA DHS and other state partners on implementation of the waiver and considering research opportunities on how it delivers for children and families in the Commonwealth.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Communications Manager ***Laura Cavello****.*

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