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October 14, 2024

Dear Tribal Health Leaders

On behalf of the Department of Health (the department) and in keeping with the responsibility to conduct tribal consultation, I am writing to inform you of a proposed Medicaid state plan amendment (SPA) and Alternative Benefit Plan amendment. This opportunity for consultation runs concurrently with the public comment period on proposed regulations.

Purpose and content of the proposed amendment:

The department proposes to amend both the Medicaid State Plan and Alternative Benefit Plan to exempt hospitals that are reimbursed based on the Diagnosis Related Groups (DRG) payment rate methodology from continued stay authorization requirements.

The department also proposes to add 1915(K) Community First Choice services to the Alternative Benefit Plan to align with the Medicaid State Plan. There are no changes to coverage or reimbursement. This amendment does not have an anticipated impact on Medicaid-eligible Alaska Native/American Indian beneficiaries or tribal health programs and the Indian Health Service.

Anticipated impact on Medicaid-eligible Alaska Native/American Indian beneficiaries:

The department anticipates the amendments exempting hospitals that are reimbursed based on the DRG payment rate methodology from continued stay authorization requirements will positively impact all Medicaid beneficiaries by reducing administrative barriers to covered services.

Anticipated impact on tribal health programs and the Indian Health Service:

The department does not anticipate the amendments exempting continued stay authorizations will have a direct impact on tribal health programs. Only those facilities that are reimbursed based on DRG payment rate methodology are impacted; to date, no tribal health programs have elected to receive payment based on DRG payment rate methodology. The proposed amendments will benefit relevant hospitals by reducing administrative burden.

Mechanism and timeline for comment

Written comments or questions regarding the proposed amendments are due no later than the close of business, November 25, 2024. If seeking an in-person meeting regarding the proposed changes, please provide a written request within 15 days of the date of this letter. Please direct all written correspondence to Emily Beaulieu, Alaska Department of Health, 3601 C Street, Suite 902, Anchorage, AK 99503, or emily.beaulieu@alaska.gov.

Comments received in response to this consultation letter are considered for consultation and not

*comment on the regulations. Comments on the regulations are not considered comments for consultation on the SPA. **You must do so separately if you wish to provide comments for consideration in both the SPA and the regulations processes.** To locate the regulations, please refer to the State of Alaska web page at the [“Public Notices”](#) link.*

Sincerely,

/s/

Emily Beaulieu, Medicaid State Plan Coordinator