



THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of
Health and Social Services

DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES
Director's Office

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March 7, 2019

Dear Tribal Leader,

On behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), in keeping with the DHSS responsibility to conduct tribal consultation, I am writing to inform you of a proposed future Medicaid state plan amendment (SPA). *This letter is written in conjunction with public notice for a regulation change.*

Changes to the content of clinic services – The purpose of the proposed state plan amendment is to comply with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) instructions to revise clinic services and to comply with legislative mandate as follows:

First, the proposed state plan amendment intends to restructure clinic services, bringing the Alaska Medicaid state plan into compliance with CMS guidance by including ambulatory surgical clinic services and end-stage renal dialysis physician clinics in the clinic services section of the plan, and removing existing language asserting the two services are not considered clinic services.

Second, the proposed state plan amendment intends to revise the required supervisory structure of mental health physician clinics by allowing reimbursement of services provided in mental health physician clinics directly supervised by a licensed physician – removing the requirement for supervision by a licensed psychiatrist.

Third, the proposed state plan amendment is likely to add integrated *mental health and substance use intake assessments*, and *screening and brief intervention services (SBIRT)*, as coverable services in line with the ongoing behavioral health system redesign.

The proposed changes, clarifying the three specific clinic service types falling within the clinic service category (mental health clinic, ambulatory surgical clinic, and end-stage renal dialysis clinic), are not anticipated to have a direct impact on service provision to Alaska Native and American Indian beneficiaries. It is anticipated that allowing physician (non-psychiatrist) oversight of mental health physician clinics may increase access to the related services for Alaska Native and American Indian beneficiaries accessing services outside the Tribal Health System or Indian Health Services.

Written comments or questions regarding the proposed future state plan amendment are due on May 7, 2019, by 4:30 PM. If you would like to request an in-person meeting or discussion regarding the proposed amendment, please provide a written request within 15-days of the date on this letter. Please direct all written correspondence to Courtney O'Byrne King, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, 4501 Business Park Boulevard, Building L. Anchorage, AK 99503 or courtney.king@alaska.gov.

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*Comments provided in response to this consultation letter will be considered comments for consultation and not taken as a comment on the proposed regulations. Comments to the proposed regulations cannot be considered comments for Medicaid consultation purposes. **If you wish to comment on both the proposed future state plan amendment and the proposed regulations you must do so separately.** To locate the proposed changes to the regulation, please refer to the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services web page, at the “Public Notices” link.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Courtney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Courtney O'Byrne King, MS
Medicaid State Plan Coordinator