

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON TIMING OF FLEXIBILITIES FOR DELIVERY OF LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS DURING COVID

The U.S. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services has advised states that they can submit new Appendix K requests to extend previously approved Appendix K content until six months after the federal public health emergency has ended, in order to plan for an orderly transition back to pre-COVID operations. Alaska has submitted this Appendix K request; it is now pending approval by CMS.

In January, the federal public health emergency (PHE) was extended through April 21, 2021. SDS has heard that the federal PHE may be extended through the end of 2021 but the new Administration has not made an official announcement yet, so until then, SDS is planning on the federal PHE ending April 21.

If Alaska's most recent Appendix K submission **is not** approved (a highly unlikely scenario but one we need to be prepared for), SDS flexibilities would end on April 21, the end of the federal public health emergency. If Alaska's most recent Appendix K submission **is** approved, Appendix K flexibilities would end in mid-October, six months after the current federal PHE end date of April 21. SDS will provide progress updates via future SDS E-Alerts. Until then, responses to questions received at SDS are provided below:

1) Will care coordinators still be able to visit their recipients via distance delivery past March 10?

Yes, until April 21 (the end of the federal PHE), or longer, if Alaska is granted the six-month extension.

2) Will family members/parents/guardians still be able to be paid to provide services?

Alaska's currently approved Appendix K allows people with a legal duty to support to be paid (if employed by a provider agency) to provide these services: Residential Habilitation Supported Living, Residential Habilitation In-Home Supports, Respite, Chore, and Day Habilitation, until April 21 (the end of the federal PHE), or longer, if Alaska is granted the six-month extension.

3) Will family members/parents/guardians also be able to be paid to provide Personal Care Services, as allowed under the Section 1135 flexibility?

Alaska's currently approved 1135 amendments to the Medicaid State Plan allows people with legal duty to support to be paid to provide Personal Care Services and Community First Choice Personal Care Services until April 21 (the end of the federal PHE), or longer, if Alaska is granted an extension for its 1135 permissions (SDS has heard an extension could be up to two months, but nothing is definite yet).

4) Will Respite still be available to allow the unpaid caregiver to go to work?

Yes, we'll still allow that until April 21 (the end of the federal PHE), or longer, if Alaska is granted the six-month extension.

5) Will SDS still accept attestations on support plan documents past March 10?

Yes, SDS will accept attestations on support plan documents until April 21 (the end of the federal PHE), or longer, if Alaska is granted the six-month extension.

6) Will distance delivered day habilitation be available after March 10?

Yes, we'll still allow that until April 21 (the end of the federal PHE), or longer, if Alaska is granted the six-month extension

7) Will day habilitation in the home still be available past March 10?

Yes, we'll still allow that until April 21 (the end of the federal PHE), or longer, if Alaska is granted the six-month extension

8) Will SDS still accept the Appendix K Support Plan Renewal (Short Form) for support plan renewals that request no changes past March 10th?

Yes, SDS will accept the short form for support plan renewals that have a start date before April 21, or longer, if Alaska is granted the six-month extension.

9) What is now required for renewal applications for waiver services?

SDS is again requiring medical documentation to be submitted with renewal waiver applications (initial applications have always had this requirement). An SDS E-Alert issued in December notified care coordinators that renewal applications would require medical information beginning February 1.

10) What should a care coordinator do when a medical provider doesn't provide a medical report or other document needed for an application for services?"

Please document your efforts to get that information and submit that documentation with your application.

11) Will SDS continue approving level of care without an assessment or resume doing in-person assessments soon?

We are no longer extending level of care determinations so have resumed doing assessments using distance delivery methods. We will not resume in-person assessments until the pandemic is over.