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NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | March 26, 2020

ND Medicaid receives waiver to implement temporary program changes to address COVID-19

BISMARCK, N.D. – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the North Dakota Department of Human Services has received a waiver from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to temporarily ease select Medicaid requirements to ensure sufficient health care services and resources are available to meet the needs of individuals enrolled in the program.

The waiver, under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, will streamline the enrollment process for Medicaid providers, reduce the burden on providers associated with getting prior approval for services and give nursing homes more time to meet mental health screening requirements. The waiver eases other administrative burdens.

"The flexibilities offered by the waiver are the first bold moves to ensure North Dakota Medicaid can meet member and provider needs quickly in this time of emergency," said Chris Jones, the department's executive director. "There is no greater priority than the health and safety of North Dakotans. Our Medicaid team worked quickly with CMS to gain this federal approval."

North Dakota was one of the first few states to receive approval by the federal government on its waiver to add more flexibility to its Medicaid program. The waiver was approved six days after the state submitted the request.

The waiver became effective on March 15, 2020, at 5 p.m. CT with a retroactive effective date of March 1. The Section 1135 waiver will end upon termination of the public health emergency, including any extensions.

North Dakota's approval letter from CMS is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/docs/cms-1135-waiver-approval-letter.pdf.

For more information on the department's response to COVID-19, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html

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