Earlier this week, the head of the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Seema Verma, travelled to Arkansas and signed a waiver request to require Medicaid enrollees to work or prepare for a job. The work requirement will only impact the expansion population, specifically childless adults 19 to 49 years old. They will be required to work or participate in activities such as volunteering or vocational training for 20 hours per week. The requirement will be phased in between June and September 2018.

“With federal approval of this requirement, Arkansas has become a national leader in rethinking the delivery of public assistance. Although Arkansas’ work requirement is one of the most stringent in the nation, it is not designed to be punitive, but to better serve the needs of Arkansans by creating pathways for individuals to take steps toward financial independence,” Gov. Asa Hutchinson said at the Capitol ceremony.

The state did not win approval to drop the Medicaid expansion eligibility from 138 percent to 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Arkansas had estimated 60,000 people would have lost eligibility for Medicaid. According to the Washington Post, Verma said, “we are continuing to work through the issues on that” but did not provide any further details on whether the request might ever be approved.

After the waiver approval was announced, the Medicaid budget was approved by the Senate without a vote to spare and later without debate by the House, News Channel 3 reported. Gov. Hutchinson released this statement:

"The early prediction was that the general assembly would not pass the DHS appropriation and Arkansas Works. I am pleased that the Senate and the House disproved the popular opinion and passed the bill. The fact that we passed it on the first vote in both houses shows a spirit of cooperation between the branches. The approval demonstrates that in Arkansas, people still listen to each other and work together for solutions. Passage of the appropriation and the reforms ensures that these vital services will still be available to the thousands of Arkansans who depend upon them."

By: Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 10:25 AM
Tags: Policy Area › Health › Insurance Coverage and Medical Care › Medicaid
Source URL:
http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/arkansas-third-state-granted-permission-require-work-medicaid-enrollees

Links