



# MEDICAID CLIENT VOICE COUNCIL ENGAGE

Volume 2

The Medicaid Client Voice Council seeks to amplify voices and increase feedback from the clients of Medicaid-funded programs.



**Dawn Stehle, Deputy Director for Health and Medicaid Director**

"DHS is committed to doing everything possible to ensure clients who are eligible remain covered after the Public Health Emergency ends."

## What's BEING SAID

"How do we ensure we are reaching communities with the highest health disparities, BIPOC\* communities...is there going to be input to make sure that you guys are targeting (these) communities?"

CaSandra Glover, Council member



\*Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color

# What's HAPPENING

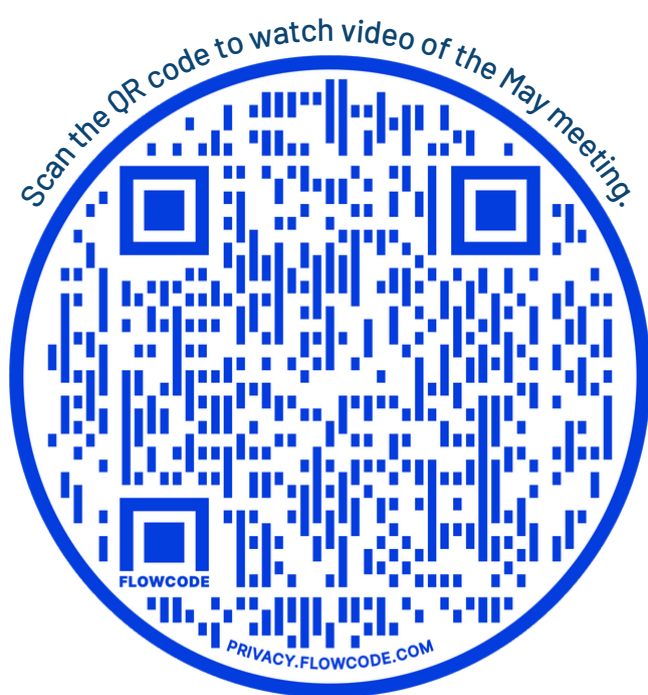


## GETTING READY FOR THE END OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Several DHS leaders share what steps DHS is taking to prepare for the end of the PHE.



## VIEW THE LAST MEETING



Many believed the end of the PHE would be announced the day before the May 17th Medicaid Client Voice Council meeting. That didn't happen. But another extension is not preventing DHS from preparing for the eventual unwinding of the PHE. DHS leadership shared with Council members the steps already being taken and the steps that will be taken to help ensure that Arkansans who are eligible for coverage provided by several Medicaid-funded programs do not have their coverage unnecessarily interrupted when the PHE ends.

# What's AHEAD

Next Council Meeting  
Tuesday, July 19th, 11 a.m.-2.p.m.  
AFMC Campus



## PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DDS WAIVER

Melissa Weatherton, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services at the Arkansas Department of Human Services, informed the members of the Medicaid Client Voice Council of proposed amendments to the Community and Employment Support (CES) Waiver (commonly called the DDS Waiver). The proposed changes will be sent to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for approval.

### Some of the proposed changes include:

1. Increasing the use of enabling technology
2. Increasing group home bed capacity from four to eight in order to avoid more institutionalization of clients who want to live in the community
3. Establishing a new service called Supervision and Monitoring for clients who are not actively working on a goal but need a level of supervision to remain safe
4. Allowing for parents and legal guardians to be paid staff through a licensed provider

Some of these proposed changes, in addition to the American Rescue Plan workforce stabilization funds that went to providers, should help meet an increase in the demand for in-home caregivers in the coming months and years. Thousands of Arkansans are on a waiting list for the CES Waiver. Governor Hutchinson announced in December that all of the people on that list at the time of his announcement will receive services over the next three years. That is about 3,200 additional Medicaid clients who will be eligible.

Weatherton believes this will also have a trickle-down effect since the PASSEs negotiate rates with the service providers and will now be bound to meet timeliness standards.

"One of my older daughters works for a company that services an individual that is on the waiver program," shared Council member Reba Shipley. "She has worked for this individual for five years and has never once received a pay raise and could go to McDonald's and make more money." Weatherton said that CMS requires states to pay managed care companies, like the PASSEs, an actuarially approved rate for their members. She explained that DHS doesn't set the hourly rates for Supportive Living (SL) workers. The PASSEs negotiate those rates with providers.

Both Council members Frank Hellmer and Naythan Dyke had questions and suggestions relating to transportation issues experienced by clients served under the CES Waiver. Hellmer suggested that a dedicated transportation unit, or pre-charged debit cards allowing for payment to ride services like Lyft and Uber (or even public or private transit companies), should be considered.

And Council Chairperson Alison Caballero suggested that the proposal to allow the new service called Supervision and Monitoring be allowed for teenagers and not just adults as it is currently drafted. DDS agreed with Caballero's comment and made the change in the waiver that will be sent to CMS for approval.

# Meet THE COUNCIL



**ALISON CABALLERO**  
LITTLE ROCK



**JERRY WATSON**  
PINE BLUFF



**DEANDRIEA BASS-CARRIGAN**  
CONWAY



**CASANDRA GLOVER**  
SEARCY



**DARONDA WILLIAMS**  
PRESCOTT



**BRADLEY LEDGERWOOD**  
CASH



**AMANDA SANDERS**  
MOUNTAIN HOME



**DEBRA ECKL**  
LITTLE ROCK



**NAYTHAN DYKE**  
FORT SMITH



**REBA SHIPLEY**  
JONESBORO



**KETTY KONISKE**  
POCAHONTAS



**MICHELE LAPPIN**  
WHITE COUNTY



**LAURA CARTWRIGHT**  
FAYETTEVILLE



**FRANK HELLMER**  
LITTLE ROCK



**ERIKA BUENROSTRO**  
DEQUEEN