



WIC/SNAP/Medicaid Alignment Project Team Meeting 'The SNAP Family Journey'

On July 22, 2020, the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger's "Cross Program Alignment Project Team" convened a group of community members, advocates, and state staff to discuss the 'family journey' a household enrolled in Medicaid undertakes to subsequently enroll in SNAP. The Blueprint asked the group what was working, and what needed improvement, in regards to a number of scenarios that a household on Medicaid who is interested in SNAP may experience such as: "How do they become aware of the SNAP program"; "How do they use their SNAP benefits?"; and "How do they stay on the SNAP program when they need to recertify?"

SNAP Works

- Every additional SNAP dollar provided during an economic downturn results in a range of multiplied economic stimulus, from \$1.50 according to a 2019 U.S. Department of Agriculture study¹, and an estimated \$1.65 according to Moody's Analytics' chief economist, Mark Zandi²
- SNAP participation among families with low incomes is associated with an average annual health care cost savings of approximately \$1,400, or close to \$56 billion annually when the national SNAP caseload is considered³
- SNAP decreases food insecurity by 30 percent⁴, and reduces the rate of poverty (especially deep poverty) by 4.4 percent⁵

Medicaid to SNAP Strengths in Colorado

- Word of mouth is a strong driver of program access, from both community members and local organizations
- Colorado has made major strides to leverage technology to improve the SNAP experience, such as developing a mobile app, allowing outreach partners to use telephonic signatures during application, sending clients in some counties text reminders about their cases, or creating PEAKPro for outreach partners
- The additional flexibilities provided to the SNAP program in the recent "The Families First Coronavirus Response Act" have ensured powerful provisions that allow families easily enroll in the program while simultaneously providing an increased benefit to create a strong foundation during this economic storm

¹ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err-265.pdf?v=8010>

² https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/boost-snap-to-capitalize-on-programs-effectiveness-and-ability-to-respond#_ftn8

³ https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=ukcpr_papers

⁴ <http://hungerreport.org/2016/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HR2016-Full-Report-Web.pdf>

⁵ <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2016/03/07/peds.2016-0339.full.pdf>

Opportunities for Cross-Program Improvement

1

Develop a state-approved communications strategy targeting Medicaid households to help alleviate confusion regarding the program due to some of its very complicated policy provisions

- Improve formal noticing between Medicaid and SNAP that can be contradictory or difficult to decipher
- Provide clients clear information about special situations that have an additional level of complexity, such as households that have students, work requirements, undocumented members, self-employment income, or medical deductions
- Help all clients understand how benefits can be utilized outside of a traditional grocery store setting (such as online, or at farmers' markets with programs such as Double Up Food Bucks)

2

Address historical misinformation that persists and may discourage eligible families on Medicaid from applying for SNAP

- Create a clearer understanding of how work impacts SNAP eligibility as some families may believe that their earned income makes them categorically ineligible for the program
- Similarly, there is a persistent myth that clients cannot be enrolled on multiple programs at the same time and receipt of Medicaid makes them ineligible for SNAP
- Amplify messaging in communities that counters the incorrect belief that most families only receive \$16 per month, when the average benefit per household is over ten times that.

3

Identify areas where technology can be improved to make the program even more accessible from other programs

- Integrate a universal SNAP interview scheduling process into CBMS so all client expectations are aligned
- Enhance PEAK and PEAKPro so that: more cross-program information or noticing is accessible; very large households with many members can apply online; and next steps for completing the SNAP application process are clear and understood

4

Research whether state policy may be adjusted to help align programs more seamlessly

- Outreach partners may be limited in what programs they can help clients apply for based on funding streams, and creative solutions that leverage alternate sources may help knock down these silos
- Align recertifications between Medicaid and SNAP by changing SNAP certifications from six months to 12 months so that a successful recertification in one program automatically renews and pushes the recertification in the other program for another year



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