

Foundational Community Supports Program

Streamlining Eligibility and Provider Payments

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5950; Section 211(99); Chapter 376; Laws of 2024

December 01, 2024

Legislative summary

The Legislature allocated \$50,000 in state general funds and \$450,000 in federal general funds for fiscal year 2025 to support the Foundational Community Supports (FCS) program at the Health Care Authority (HCA). These funds were specifically designated for the purpose of contracting for the development of an application programming interface or software aimed at optimizing the processes for eligibility determination and provider payment transactions.

Background

The Foundational Community Supports program collaborates with Wellpoint, a Third-Party Administrator (TPA), to facilitate the program across Washington State. Currently, there are 230 contracted providers across over 540 locations delivering FCS services to eligible participants. The provider network comprises a diverse range of provider types, including homeless services, housing, treatment facilities, and drop-in centers. While diversity among providers is a primary objective, a challenge arises from varying levels of understanding and knowledge regarding the Medicaid system, eligibility, and claims payment processes.

In 2020, the State established new processes by which any FCS provider, whether they have provided Medicaid services before or not, are granted access to the ProviderOne system (the State’s Medicaid Management Information System, or MMIS) to assist in eligibility determination. To support providers across the State, the FCS team provides a variety of training courses, both pre-recorded and live, to enhance providers’ knowledge. HCA also contracted with the Corporation for Supportive Housing to provide a Medicaid Academy specifically to support providers new to Medicaid reimbursement.

While these training courses and system access are helpful, providers new to Medicaid (nonprofit organizations, housing providers, outreach programs) still experience systemic challenges that limit their operation of the program.

Provider network

As of September 30, 2024, the Foundational Community Supports program contracts with 230 providers that include 543 unique service locations across Washington State.

Region	SE	SH	SE + SH	Total
Great Rivers	4	0	33	37
Greater Columbia	6	1	54	61
King	24	39	82	145

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North Central	1	0	30	31
North Sound	12	3	47	62
Pierce	10	5	37	52
Salish	5	2	25	32
Southwest	3	3	14	20
Spokane	8	7	64	79
Thurston-Mason	4	5	15	24
Grand total	77	65	401	543

Key findings

Feedback gathered before the implementation of the provider survey highlighted the following prevalent issues:

- Providers experience difficulty accessing all systems used for verifying eligibility, especially systems that local governments control access to, such as the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS).
- Challenges navigating and/or verifying enrollment in ProviderOne have led to claims recoupments.
- Providers that do not utilize an electronic health record system experience additional tracking and payment challenges.
- Administrative costs for providers are not allocated independently of the reimbursement rate.
- Ongoing concerns regarding staff retention and the need for retraining.
- Local governments are establishing mandates concerning provider utilization of FCS.

Key recommendations

The HCA recognizes provider capacity to track and maintain eligibility, enrollment, and claims payment data varies widely across the state, and that different provider types may not have access to all of the administrative data systems used to determine client eligibility prior to engaging with the FCS Third-Party Administrator (TPA), Wellpoint. To address this gap, the FCS program leverages administrative data through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Research and Data Analysis (RDA) division to provide validation reports to Wellpoint to assist in determining client eligibility. This requires FCS providers to engage regularly with Wellpoint program staff to navigate these challenges at a frequency that can be difficult to manage depending on a given provider's capacity.

With the volume of contracted providers across the state, HCA recognizes that the need for IT support, electronic health records (EHR) systems, and access to other data systems presents significant challenges that may not be fully addressed with the amounts appropriated in this proviso. However, HCA aims to use

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this funding to build upon the existing infrastructure in ProviderOne and at Wellpoint to maximize its impact. To this end, HCA has designed and initiated a survey that assesses the current landscape of how providers manage claims payments and client eligibility processes, identify gaps, and solicit feedback from providers to help inform the future state of how eligibility is determined, and claims are paid in the FCS program.

Next steps

FCS program administration collaborates with several national technical assistance organizations and current and prospective providers to gain insight into their needs and preferences concerning a software design aimed at optimizing provider-facing processes. The FCS team is actively partnering with HCA Communications to create a provider-facing survey, while dedicated FCS trainers are also engaging with providers for additional feedback. The provider survey will be conducted in November 2024. The FCS administrator will assess the survey results in conjunction with the quarterly FCS Advisory Council and will consider subsequent steps based on the findings.

Contact

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