

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 461 Medicare Transportation Services
SPONSOR(S): Finance & Facilities Subcommittee, Trabulsy and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** CS/SB 348

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 116 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CS/HB 461 passed the House on April 14, 2021, as CS/CB 348.

Medicaid is a partnership of the federal and state governments established to provide coverage for health services for low income, eligible persons. The program is administered by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and financed by federal and state funds. Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people 65 or older, people under 65 with certain disabilities, and people of any age with end-stage renal disease. The program is administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Individuals who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare are known as "dual-eligibles". Medicaid wraps around Medicare's coverage by providing financial assistance to dual-eligible recipients. In cases where Medicare does not pay the full amount billed for a service rendered to a dual-eligible recipient, Medicaid may cover the balance, and may pay Medicare cost sharing amounts.

Florida Medicaid currently covers emergency and non-emergency ambulance services as a mandatory state plan benefit, meaning that they are available to all Medicaid recipients. This includes both ground and air ambulances. Florida law also expressly requires Medicaid to pay all Medicare deductibles and coinsurance for emergency transportation services provided to dual-eligibles by licensed ambulances, but is silent as to cost-sharing for non-emergency transportation.

The bill requires Medicaid to pay all deductibles and coinsurance costs for Medicare-covered services provided by a licensed ambulance according to appropriate medical procedure codes for those services. This change requires the reimbursement of deductible and coinsurance costs by Medicaid for non-emergency transportation services provided to dual-eligibles, in addition to the current law requirement for the reimbursement of such costs for emergency transportation services.

The bill has an indeterminate, but likely insignificant, negative fiscal impact on AHCA, and no fiscal impact on local government.

The bill was approved by the Governor on June 16, 2021, ch. 2021-95, L.O.F., the effective date is July 1, 2021.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Background

Florida Medicaid Program

Medicaid is the health care safety net for low-income Floridians. Medicaid is a partnership of the federal and state governments established to provide coverage for health services for eligible persons. The program is administered by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and financed by federal and state funds. AHCA delegates certain functions to other state agencies, including the Department of Children and Families, which makes eligibility determinations.

The structure of each state's Medicaid program varies, but what states must pay for is largely determined by the federal government, as a condition of receiving federal funds.¹ Federal law sets the amount, scope, and duration of services offered in the program, among other requirements. These federal requirements create an entitlement that comes with constitutional due process protections. The entitlement means that two parts of the Medicaid cost equation – people and utilization – are largely predetermined for the states. The federal government sets the minimum mandatory populations to be included in every state Medicaid program. The federal government also sets the minimum mandatory benefits to be covered in every state Medicaid program. These benefits include physician services, hospital services, home health services, and family planning.² States can add benefits, with federal approval. Florida has added many optional benefits, including prescription drugs, ambulatory surgical center services, and dialysis.³

The Florida Medicaid program covers approximately 4.5 million low-income individuals.⁴ Medicaid is the second largest single program in the state, behind public education, representing approximately one-third of the total FY 2020-2021 state budget.⁵

Medicaid Managed Care

States have some flexibility in the provision of Medicaid services. Section 1915(b) of the Social Security Act provides authority for the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to waive requirements to the extent that he or she “finds it to be cost-effective and efficient and not inconsistent with the purposes of this title.” Also, Section 1115 of the Social Security Act allows states to use innovative service delivery systems that improve care, increase efficiency, and reduce costs.

States may also ask the federal government to waive federal requirements to expand populations or services, or to try new ways of service delivery. Many states have elected to provide Medicaid benefits through a managed care model. Traditionally, Medicaid services are paid for under a fee-for-service (FFS) reimbursement model. Under the FFS model, the state pays providers directly for each covered service received by a Medicaid beneficiary. Under managed care, the state pays a fee to a managed care plan for each person enrolled in the plan. Participating health plans receive capitated payments for services provided. Under this approach, providers receive a fixed per person (or “capitated”) payment that covers all health care services over a defined time period, adjusted for each patient’s expected

¹ Title 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396-1396w-5; Title 42 C.F.R. Part 430-456 (§§ 430.0-456.725) (2016).

² S. 409.905, F.S.

³ S. 409.906, F.S.

⁴ Agency for Health Care Administration, *Florida Statewide Medicaid Monthly Enrollment Report*, December 2020, https://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/Finance/data_analytics/enrollment_report/index.shtml (last accessed May 3, 2021).

⁵ Ch. 2020-111, L.O.F. See also *Fiscal Analysis in Brief: 2020 Legislative Session*, p. 3,

https://flsenate.gov/UserContent/Committees/Publications/FiscalAnalysisInBrief/2020_Fiscal_Analysis_In_Brief.pdf (last accessed MAY 3, 2021).

needs, and are also held accountable for high-quality outcomes.⁶ In turn, the plan pays providers for all of the Medicaid services a beneficiary may require that are included in the plan's contract with the state.⁷

For example, Florida has a Section 1115 waiver to use a comprehensive managed care delivery model for primary and acute care services, the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program.⁸ The MMA program was enacted in 2011 and fully implemented in 2014.

Medicaid Transportation Services

Emergency transportation services provide ground and air ambulance transportation in case of emergency.⁹ An emergency is any event that puts the health and life of a Medicaid beneficiary at serious risk without immediate treatment. Non-emergency transportation refers to a broader range of services that transports a beneficiary to medical appointments or transfers a beneficiary from one facility to another. This type of transportation may be provided ambulances, wheelchair vans, taxis, stretcher cars, and buses.¹⁰

Florida Medicaid currently covers emergency and non-emergency ambulance services¹¹ as a mandatory state plan benefit, meaning that they are available to all Medicaid recipients.¹² This includes both ground and air ambulances. In the FFS delivery system, the Medicaid reimbursement rate for ambulance transportation varies based on the mode (air or ground) and the needs of the recipient during transport (i.e., basic life support, advanced life support, or specialty care).¹³ In the MMA program, reimbursement for ambulance transportation is built into the capitation rates paid to participating managed care plans.¹⁴

Medicare-Medicaid Dual-Eligibles

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people 65 or older, people under 65 with certain disabilities, and people of any age with end-stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant).¹⁵ The program is administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Individuals who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare are known as “dual-eligibles.” These individuals may be served by either FFS Medicaid or the MMA program. In either case, Medicaid wraps around Medicare's coverage by providing financial assistance to dual-eligible recipients. Medicare covers their acute care services, while Medicaid covers Medicare premiums and cost sharing, and - for those below certain income and asset thresholds - long-term care services. The term “dual-eligible” encompasses all Medicare beneficiaries who receive Medicaid assistance, including those who receive

⁶ Under capitation, contracting organizations or health plans agree to provide or accept financial liability for a broad range of Medicaid covered services in return for a fixed monthly payment for each individual enrolled in the contracting organization's plan. The Florida Medicaid program has been using capitated payment systems since the early 1990s.

⁷ Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC), *Provider payment and delivery systems*, <https://www.macpac.gov/medicaid-101/provider-payment-and-delivery-systems/> (last accessed May 3, 2021).

⁸ S. 409.964, F.S.

⁹ Rule 59G-4.015, F.A.C.

¹⁰ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, *Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Booklet for Providers*, <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Fraud-Prevention/Medicaid-Integrity-Education/Downloads/nemt-booklet.pdf> (last accessed May 3, 2021).

¹¹ Ambulance services are otherwise regulated by ch. 401, F.S.

¹² S. 409.905(12), F.S.

¹³ Agency for Health Care Administration, *Agency Bill Analysis for HB 461 of 2021*, February 24, 2021.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Medicare.gov, *What's Medicare*, <https://www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers/your-medicare-coverage-choices/whats-medicare> (last accessed May 3, 2021).

the full range of Medicaid benefits and those who receive assistance only with Medicare premiums or cost sharing.¹⁶

In cases where Medicare does not pay the full amount billed for a service rendered to a dual-eligible recipient, the claim is transferred to AHCA for a determination on whether Medicaid can cover the remaining balance. This is referred to as a crossover claim. The process facilitates Medicaid programs in covering the costs of the recipient's deductible and coinsurance amounts.¹⁷ Section 409.908(13), F.S., sets parameters on Medicaid's financial obligation for deductibles and coinsurance incurred by dual-eligibles.

Transportation Services for Dual-Eligibles

Medicare pays transportation service providers a base rate plus an additional amount based on mileage traveled. These rates are based on multiple factors including geography and regional costs of living and can range from as low as \$400.00 to \$1,500.00 depending on the level of care and miles traveled.¹⁸

Florida law currently specifies that Medicaid pays all deductibles and coinsurance for Medicare emergency transportation services provided by licensed ambulances.¹⁹ However, Florida law is silent on whether Medicaid must pay deductibles and coinsurance for Medicare non-emergency transportation services.

In practice, FFS Medicaid already pays the costs of Medicare deductibles and coinsurance for dual-eligibles who receive non-emergency transportation services.²⁰ It is unclear whether MMA plans pay these costs for covered individuals.

Effect of the Bill

The bill requires Medicaid to pay all deductibles and coinsurance costs for Medicare-covered services provided by a licensed ambulance according to appropriate medical procedure codes for those services. This change requires the reimbursement of deductible and coinsurance costs by Medicaid for *non-emergency* transportation services provided to dual-eligibles, in addition to the current law requirement for the reimbursement of such costs for emergency transportation services.

The bill aligns statute with current reimbursement practices under FFS Medicaid. MMA plans that do not currently cover the costs of Medicare deductibles and coinsurance for dual-eligibles receiving non-emergency transportation services will be required to do so.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2021.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

¹⁶ Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, *Data Book: Beneficiaries Dually Eligible for Medicare and Medicaid*, January 2018, <https://www.macpac.gov/publication/data-book-beneficiaries-dually-eligible-for-medicare-and-medicaid-3/> (last accessed May 3, 2021).

¹⁷ *Supra* note 13.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ S. 409.908(13)(c)4., F.S.

²⁰ *Supra* note 13.

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill may have a negative, but likely insignificant, fiscal impact on AHCA. In FFS Medicaid, Medicare deductibles and coinsurance for non-emergency transportation are already paid through Medicaid.²¹ In the MMA program, reasonable costs to comply with program requirements must be built into the capitation rates paid to participating health plans. The bill may lead to a small increase in the capitation rates by requiring plans to cover non-emergency transportation costs that would otherwise accrue to patients dually-eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill may lead to additional reimbursements to ambulance providers who serve individuals dually-eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

²¹ *Supra* note 13.