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Press Release

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Governor Hassan, HHS Announce Federal Approval of Transformation Waiver to Strengthen Behavioral Health System, Substance Use Disorder Services

Federal Waiver to Provide \$30 Million in Matching Funds Per Year for Five Years to Transform New Hampshire's Behavioral Health Delivery System

CONCORD - Continuing her efforts to strengthen community-based mental health and to combat the heroin and substance abuse crisis, Governor Maggie Hassan and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Commissioner Nick Toumpas announced today that the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved a \$150 million waiver to transform New Hampshire's behavioral health delivery system to help lower the long-term growth in health care costs for the state.

Under the waiver, New Hampshire will receive up to \$30 million in federal funding a year to create a transformation fund, which will make performance-based incentive payments to new regional networks of health care and community service providers (Integrated Delivery Networks) who propose specific projects that will strengthen the capacity of the state's behavioral health system, integrate mental health and substance use disorder care with primary care, and lower the long-term growth in health care costs for the state.

"Our strained mental health system and the heroin and substance abuse crisis are urgent public health and safety challenges facing our state, and demand for mental health and substance abuse – which frequently co-occur – services is increasing," Governor Hassan said. "With thousands of Granite Staters receiving coverage for these services under the bipartisan New Hampshire Health Protection Program, the extension of the substance use disorder benefit to the traditional Medicaid population beginning in July, and the ongoing need to strengthen our efforts to combat the opioid epidemic, it is critical that behavioral health provider capacity is positioned to effectively deliver the integrated care that our residents need. Strengthening these services is critical to the health and well-being of our people, the safety of our communities, and to the success of our businesses and economy."

Under the waiver, CMS will provide up to \$30 million in funding per year for a total of five years to make payments to the new networks. In committing to fund the waiver, the federal Department of Health and Human Services has estimated that by the end of the five years, the transformation projects would reduce what the federal government and the State of New Hampshire would otherwise be spending on Medicaid services.

Through the regional networks, New Hampshire will transform its behavioral health delivery system by: integrating physical and behavioral health to better address the full range of Medicaid beneficiaries' needs; expanding provider capacity to address behavioral health needs in appropriate settings; and reducing gaps in care during transitions – from treatment back into the community – through improved care coordination for individuals with behavioral health issues.

"The approval of this waiver is an important step forward for a New Hampshire-specific solution," Governor Hassan said. "It will allow better integration of behavioral health care with primary care across the state – along with the community supports that people need to succeed – improving outcomes for individuals and lowering the growth in health care costs for our state. Many people across the state have worked tirelessly on this waiver for the past few years, and I thank Commissioner Toumpas and the Department of Health and Human Services and legislators from both parties for their hard work, as well as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for its approval."

"This waiver aligns with the Department's focus on the whole person approach to meeting the physical and mental health needs of our residents and will transform the State's behavioral health system," said




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Commissioner Toumpas. "It will facilitate greater integration of behavioral health and substance use disorder services, leading to more efficient service delivery and better outcomes for the people we serve."

Before the end of January, HHS will begin a series of public stakeholder meetings around the state on the waiver's implementation.

- [Approval letter from CMS](#) 
- [Expenditure authority](#) 
- [Terms and conditions of the waiver](#) 

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