

Children's Personal Care Services (CPCS) Program Changes in response to COVID-19

OVERVIEW

Children qualify for CPCS because they require extra support with their activities of daily living (ADLs). The public health emergency caused by COVID-19 means that families may not be able to access extra support from an outside provider due to the increased risk for exposure to the coronavirus.

In response to these added barriers to care, the Vermont Agency of Human Services requested a waiver from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) to allow parents and family members of children with CPCS to receive payment for the extra personal care they are providing. This is a significant, but temporary change to the federal regulations that govern CPCS.

HOW WILL THIS WORK?

A parent, or family member usually excluded by rule, may receive bi-weekly payments for the extra personal care they are providing during the public health emergency.

The amount of the payment is based on the child's weekly allocation of CPCS hours, made at the base Medicaid rate (\$13.74 per hour). This arrangement is different from the employer-employee model typically used for CPCS.

Parents will submit an invoice to ARIS Solutions every two week that includes some basic information, such as the care provider's name, their relationship to the child, the date range, and the number of hours provided. A copy of the invoice can be downloaded from the ARIS website. Copies will be mailed by ARIS, along with postage paid return envelopes, in the next round of bi-weekly spending reports as well.

Payments will be made from the child's current CPCS allocation.

This waiver is retroactive to March 15, 2020, the Sunday prior to the closure order for Vermont schools. This means parents can submit invoices for the extra care they have provided since March 15, 2020.

ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS

Can I still use other Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)?

Yes. If a family chooses to access support from an external PCA, this will affect the amount of funds available to pay parents and caregivers through the temporary waiver.

How many hours per week can I use?

Parents and caregivers who choose to receive funds through the temporary waiver can only be paid for as many hours per week as their child has been previously found eligible.

However, parents can elect to be paid for fewer hours than the weekly total, in order to reserve funds for their external PCAs. The ARIS invoice form allows parents to indicate the number of hours they are paid, up to their child's weekly limit.

Do I need to report these payments on my taxes?

Yes. Parents and family members who access CPCS COVID payments will be provided with the necessary tax reporting forms by ARIS Solutions, no later than January 31, 2021.

How long will this waiver be in place?

For the duration of the public health emergency, as declared by the Federal Government.

What if I have not yet enrolled with ARIS Solutions as an Employer?

These payments are not a form of employment. However, for the documentation needs of ARIS and the State, you still need to complete the "[CPCS Child-Parent Relationship Form](#)" in addition to the bi-weekly invoice.

Can I submit an invoice in advance?

No. Medicaid rules require that payments be only made for services that have already been provided.

Can I submit COVID forms to pay my regular personal care attendant (PCA)?

No. CPCS COVID payments are only intended for parents and family members who are usually prohibited from being paid to provide personal care services. A PCA hired by the family can continue to submit timesheets in the usual way.

OTHER PROGRAM CHANGES

CPCS is extending children's allocations at their current weekly levels for 90 days at a time. We will notify you in advance of the need for another application.

If there has been a change to your child's underlying need for personal care services, reapplications can still be reviewed with some modifications to the application process. New applications are still being reviewed as well.

Please note: any additional supervision needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic do not, in themselves, constitute a change to a child's need for CPCS.

Please contact CPCS program staff with any questions. We want to know how this change is affecting your family and how we can be most attentive to individual family circumstances.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND UPDATES

How will these payments affect my benefits, such as 3 Squares and Reach Up?

The Economic Services Division (ESD) at the Vermont Department for Children and Families has confirmed that all benefits administered by the division **will not count** CPCS COVID payments against a parent or family's eligibility. [Go here for](#)

[a list of ESD benefits.](#)

Do I need to report these payments if I am accessing unemployment insurance benefits?

Yes. Although these payments are not a form of employment, the Vermont Department of Labor has determined they count as wages and must be reported on unemployment insurance claims.

[What is the Office of Inspector General's \(OIG\) exclusions list?](#)

This list contains individuals who have been determined ineligible to receive Medicaid payments, most likely due to a prior fraud conviction. Before issuing payments to parents, ARIS will screen names against the OIG exclusion list.

IMPORTANT LINKS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

DS/CPCS/FMR/CFC/



PDAC/Flex

[ARIS Solutions](#) – Medicaid Department (symbol above), 1-800-798-1658

ARIS [COVID Payment Form](#) – invoice required to receive payment

ARIS [Parent/child relationship Form](#) – only required if the person getting paid has not previously enrolled as an employer through ARIS

ARIS [CPCS pay cycles](#) – lists important dates and timeframes

[Children's Personal Care Services](#) – main website

TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE REQUIRED FORMS:

[ARIS COVID Payment Forms](#) should be submitted for bi-weekly pay cycles

For the first submission, parents who want to “catch up” from the March 15, 2020 effective date may include multiple pay periods, but these must be clearly identified on the form (i.e. 3/15/20 – 3/28/20, 3/29/20 – 4/11/20, etc.).

Subsequent forms should only list one 2-week pay period, **not** single or partial

weeks, or single days.

[ARIS COVID Payment Forms](#) can only include one (1) child

Families with multiple children who receive CPCS must submit separate forms, per pay cycle, for each child

[ARIS COVID Payment Forms](#) can only include one (1) payee

When different parents are accessing payments (not to exceed their child's weekly allocation of hours), separate forms must be submitted

The [ARIS Parent/Child Form](#) must be submitted if the person requesting payment is not the Employer of Record for the child's CPCS benefits.

It is not necessary to submit this form every pay cycle after ARIS has one on file for the payee.

ARIS can only make payments up to the weekly amount of CPCS hours deemed medically necessary by the program

When forms are submitted for more hours per week than the child has been allocated, ARIS will adjust the request to match the hours per week communicated by CPCS.

When forms are submitted requesting payment in excess of what is remaining in the child's current authorization period, ARIS will only pay up to the remaining balance in the allocation.

Pre-paid return envelopes and additional copies of the forms are available upon request by calling ARIS Solutions (1-800-798-1658)