

Improving the Health Care System

Medicaid Issues: Telehealth reimbursements; access to coverage (especially in non-expansion states), ongoing need for dental and other services, growing area for medical respite care (see priority below). Congress has given states extra Medicaid funding during pandemic, prohibited dis-enrollment, and is now considering [alternatives](#) for closing the coverage gap population in 12 non-expansion states.

Resources: [Telehealth issue brief](#), [Insurance Coverage at HCH Programs, 2020](#)

Medicare-for-All Issues: While [Medicare For All](#) legislation is active in Congress, current health care considerations in Congress include [incremental expansions of Medicare](#) to dental, vision, and hearing, and [lowering the eligibility age to 60](#).

Resources: [C19 & single payer](#), [single payer & other countries](#), webinar: [Covid19 Coffee Chat: How to Be a Single-Payer Advocate During a Pandemic](#)

Events/Activities: Medicare For All Act of 2021 [Town Hall Press Event](#) (Bobby at 1:14:09), Medicare For All National Coalition (NNU), Monthly Meetings with Rep. Jayapal's staff on M4All; planned workshop at 2022 Conference

Discussion question: How to balance single payer advocacy v. incremental coverage expansions?

Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19

Issues: Low vaccine rates among clients, accommodating staff mandates, balancing usual services with ongoing C19 response, community partnerships to conduct testing/vaccines/services in I&Q programs, potential impact of "long-COVID" on clients, impact of hospital "Critical Care Plans" (aka rationing), expiration of current PHE on Oct 20 (though likely extended), staff burnout/shortage

Recent Resources: **New staff KATIE LEAGUE, COVID-19 Project Manager;** [Winter is Coming](#), [Vaccines \(1 & 2\)](#), [HCH Partnerships with CoCs](#), [Use of ARPA Health Center Funding](#), and [Interim Lessons Learned](#), Poverty Policy Podcast Episode 13: [Vaccines](#); [letter to Governors and local officials](#) on vaccine access for PEH (with 93 endorsements); webinar series on C19 partnerships with [Washington DC](#), [Hennepin Health/Minneapolis](#), and [Chicago](#); webinar on [homeless mortality](#) and the impact of C19; [summary](#) of key provisions of the American Rescue Act; [Statement on COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates for Staff in the HCH Community](#); [The Biden Administration's COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate: Information for the HCH Community](#); upcoming issue brief assessing hospital Critical Care Plans and the factors used to ration care; and 18 biweekly e-blasts of the Council COVID-19 "[Flash Blasts](#)."

Events/Activities: Weekly meetings with HUD, HRSA, VA, CDC & others; regular presentations at HUD Office Hours; webinars with CDC, ASTHO, and others; staff presentations at CDC-HUD after-action meeting in Atlanta; and biweekly focus groups with HCH clinical staff, and monthly focus groups with consumers.

Discussion question: How is your program or community implementing permanent improvements as a result of C19 funding or policy changes? This may mean buying hotels/motels, expanding housing availability, expanding telehealth, developing partnerships with CoCs/public health authorities/others, etc.).

Increasing Access to SUD

Issues: Growing [overdose epidemic](#) and need for low-barrier access to care; growing funding and political support for harm reduction programs (to include SSPs); eliminating barriers to prescribe buprenorphine (e.g., "[X-Waiver](#)" training requirement, patient limits, scope-of-practice, etc.); ongoing stigma;

Resources: Coming soon: *Medication Assisted Treatment at HCH Programs, 2020*

Coming soon: "HCH on the Frontlines" storytelling portal

Events/Activities: Lobby meetings with members of Congress on the [MAT Act](#), engagement with SAMHSA/HHS about SUD/MOUD, promotion and participation in Overdose Awareness Day, Drug Policy Coalition, MAT Act Coalition; planned issue brief to clarify federal guidelines on SSPs and illustrate how to incorporate SSPs into health center operations;

Discussion question: How do we best integrate consumer and provider experiences with our SUD advocacy work in an accessible, sensitive, trauma-informed way?

Advancing Medical Respite Care

Issues: Growing role amid C19 response; growing interest in/implementation of Medicaid reimbursements (CA, WA, MN, NY, MI); receipt of contract to write Washington State Medicaid report;

Upcoming Resources: **MRC-CoC Partnership publication** with the [Framework for an Equitable C19 Homelessness Response](#) outlines issues surrounding MRC-CoC relationships; features interview in Yakima plus focus group findings from MRCs and CoCs (November 2021); **Washington State Medicaid paper** establishing MRC as a statewide Medicaid benefit includes feedback from listening sessions, speaks to psychiatric needs, and makes recommendations for reimbursement (January 2022); **Health Centers and MRC Programs issue brief** outlines how health centers can maximize MRC services/programs (Spring 2022).

Discussion question: What conversations are you having with your Medicaid leadership, community hospitals, or other stakeholders about expanding MRC and/or creating funding opportunities?

Other Issues

Evictions & Housing: [Action Steps for HCH Community of Evictions](#), Poverty Policy Podcast episode 12: [Evictions](#),

Criminalization: [Statement](#) with [National Coalition for Housing Justice](#) (NCHJ) on criminalization

Taking Action & Getting Involved

1. Subscribe to the [Mobilizer](#) (issued last Thursday of every month) and take the action steps outlined in each issue
2. Subscribe to the [C19 Flash Blast](#) (issued every other Wednesday)
3. Attend **Policy Committee** (2nd Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 EST; contact Regina at reed@nhchc.org)
4. Attend **Administrators Committee** (2nd Mondays, 12:00-1:00 EST; contact Michael at mdurham@nhchc.org)
5. Submit policy/advocacy-related [conference proposals](#) (due date: October 31, 2021)
6. Use our work to **advance your work** (issue briefs, webinars, etc.)
7. Listen, rate, review, and share the **Poverty Policy Podcast** on [Apple](#), [Stitcher](#), [Soundcloud](#)
8. (For providers and consumers) Set up a 15-minute informal phone interview with Regina at reed@nhchc.org to discuss your experience with barriers to care for **substance use disorders/medications for opioid use disorders (SUD/MOUD)** or **health insurance coverage**.
9. If you are operating an **syringe services program (SSP)**—or want to be—set up a 15-minute informal phone interview with Katie at kleague@nhchc.org to discuss your challenges and lessons learned to inform our SSP work.
10. Take action at the local level by submitting an op-ed to your local media about the importance of ending homelessness, getting involved in your [local chapter](#) of Healthcare-NOW!, writing/assigning policy papers and articles for classes, joining local/professional association advocacy groups, or taking other **individual action**.

Primary Partners

- National Association of Community Health Centers
- National Alliance to End Homelessness
- National Coalition for the Homeless
- National Low Income Housing Coalition
- National Homelessness Law Center
- Drug Policy Alliance
- End Substance Use Disorder
- Healthcare-NOW!

Active Coalitions

(* = dues paying member)

1. [Partnership for Medicaid](#)*
2. *Medicaid Waiver Task Force* - lead by Georgetown University Center for Children & Families
3. *Mental Health Liaison Group** - lead by American Psychological Association
4. *Non-Defense Discretionary (NDD) United** – lead by Coalition for Health Funding
5. [Friends of HRSA](#) - lead by American Public Health Association
6. *Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Coalition* - lead by private consulting group
7. *Big Tent Protect our Care* - lead by Families USA
8. *Campaign for Guaranteed Health* – lead by Healthcare-NOW!
9. [SAVE for All](#) – lead by Coalition on Human Needs
10. *COVID19 Policy Group* - lead by Coalition on Human Needs
11. [Made to Save C19 Vaccine Coalition](#) - lead by Made to Save
12. [Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose](#) - run by American Society of Addiction Medicine
13. *Drug Policy Work Group* - lead by Drug Policy Alliance
14. *MAT Act Strategy Group* - lead by End Substance Use Disorder
15. *Coalition for Housing and Community Development Funding** - lead by National Low Income Housing Coalition
16. *Homeless Advocates Group* – lead by National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
17. [Housing Not Handcuffs](#) – lead by National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
18. [Bring America Home Now! Campaign](#) - lead by National Coalition for the Homeless
19. [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) – lead by the National Low Income Housing Coalition
20. [National Coalition for Housing Justice](#) - lead by National Low Income Housing Coalition

Sign-On Letters: We have supported our coalition partners on a wide range of issues by signing on to ~50 Congressional & Administration letters