

# ARIZONA PEER AND FAMILY COALITION

709 E CALLE CHULO RD, GOODYEAR, AZ 85338



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Mr. Tom Betlach, Director of AHCCCS  
801 E. Jefferson St. MD 4100  
Phoenix, AZ 85034  
publicinput@azahcccs.gov

Dear Director Betlach:

On behalf of the Arizona Peer and Family Coalition board and members, we would appreciate the opportunity to comment on the current Medicaid Section 1115 waiver. AHCCCS has done some admirable work in this community and we would like to see this continue. We would like to share our concerns with the proposed requirements for "able-bodied" adults receiving Medicaid services.

**1. We feel the immediate need to define the term "able-bodied".**

When determining this definition, it's important to understand the cyclical nature of mental illness. One month an individual may meet the "able-bodied" requirement, followed by periods of acute symptom exacerbation.

**2. We oppose the policy of requiring able-bodied adults to verify on a monthly basis compliance with the work requirements and any changes in family income. We also oppose the policy that would ban an eligible person from enrollment for one year if the eligible person knowingly failed to report a change in family income or made a false statement regarding compliance with the work requirements.**

We find this requirement to be burdensome and an administrative burden to both the claimant and AHCCCS. We know that 79% of adult and child Medicaid enrollees in Arizona are in families with at least one worker. For parents struggling to make ends meet in low-paying jobs, imposing a monthly reporting requirement with the penalty of a year lock out period only makes the goal of climbing out of poverty that much more difficult. Many people are able to work because of the AHCCCS coverage that keeps their chronic and mental health conditions under control. Work requirements would likely end in a loss of health coverage, adding to our unemployment and poverty rate.

**3. We oppose the proposed lifetime coverage limit of five years for able bodied adults.**

Individuals who experience poverty are at significantly greater risk of mental illness and individuals experiencing a mental illness often experience periods of wellness, interrupted by periods of severe illness. Imposing a five-year lifetime limit on AHCCCS eligibility contradicts what is known about disability, chronic disease and mental illness, and jeopardizes progress already gained by those covered by AHCCCS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Arizona Peer and Family Coalition

Krista Long  
Acting President

Carol McDermott  
Treasurer

Debra Jorgenson  
Secretary

Jim Dunn  
Jill Hogan  
Richard Beeman  
Phil Sawyer  
Sherron Candelaria