

ACTION ALERT

Senate Bill 42: Medicaid for Certain Incarcerated Persons

Access to health care coverage is a critical component of successful reentry to the community after incarceration.

**PLEASE CALL GOVERNOR MARTINEZ
(505-476-2200)
AND ASK HER TO SIGN SENATE BILL 42!**

What You Need to Know:

Senate Bill 42 would require the Human Services Department to stop terminating an individual's healthcare coverage when they become incarcerated. The bill would also allow unenrolled individuals to apply for Medicaid before release. By doing these two things, this bill is a first step in increasing an individual's likelihood of successful reentry into the community.

This bill will help reduce recidivism and is likely to save substantial costs. Healthcare coverage is necessary for accessing mental health treatment and medical care. The experiences of other states has shown that people who are enrolled in Medicaid are less likely to be rearrested, and more likely to participate in behavioral health treatment and other health care services than individuals without Medicaid coverage.

The costs to implement any IT changes necessary for the enrollment system will be paid up to 90% by the federal government. Given this federal match rate, New Mexico has an unprecedented opportunity to improve individual and community health and public safety while also generating significant savings to the state and counties for health care and criminal justice costs.

States can and have been encouraged by the federal government to suspend rather than terminate Medicaid for inmates upon incarceration so that those who are eligible can receive Medicaid as soon as possible after release. HSD currently terminates inmates after 60 days in jail, making them go through the application process again at release.

States can accept applications for Medicaid while a person is incarcerated. HSD currently does not allow any inmate to apply before discharge. This results in people being discharged without healthcare coverage or access to services.

HSD can and must take further steps. While HSD has started allowing people to apply for temporary Medicaid coverage immediately after being released, many people cannot do this because they are released during evening hours or weekends. Often, they must also seek support from the detention facility which may not be available at the time. This cumbersome process could be avoided if people were allowed to apply for Medicaid at any time during incarceration.