



June 8, 2021

Ann Dalton
Deputy Secretary
Division of Medicaid
Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration

via email: Ann.Dalton@ahca.myflorida.com

Re: Urgent Suggestions for Use of FMAP bump for HCBS

Dear Ann,

Again, we greatly appreciate that you and your team are working on a plan for the \$ 320 million FMAP bump available to Florida under the American Rescue Plan for certain Medicaid HCBS expenditures. If there has been any change in the Agency's intent to submit a plan, please let me know immediately.

These comments are in followup to our [May 21, 2020 public comment letter](#) and our May 28, 2021 email requesting that the newly available funds be utilized in ways that will assist enrollees who are currently suffering from the lack of funding. We included links to our website describing the dire situation of 3 such clients, [Alene](#), [Shirley](#) and [Hortense](#) (mother of Thelma).

The Florida Health Justice Project is part of a broad community of stakeholders, including participants in HCBS programs, HCBS providers, caregivers, and other advocates who can contribute valuable insight, ideas, and feedback to develop a plan under section 9817 of the ARP.

As you likely know, CMS is encouraging states to utilize stakeholder engagement in order to ensure varied perspectives on how to expand, enhance, and strengthen HCBS, and they have allowed states a 30 day

extension to allow for consumer input. **Given that we have still not received any communication about your plan development, and the urgent and specific priorities we have raised on behalf of our clients, we are concerned. We urge that you take advantage of the extension and either allow for consumer input or respond to our suggestions.**

As I explained in my May 28 email, one of our clients, [Alene Shaheed](#), presented to a special Congressional staff briefing a few weeks ago, and she was also being interviewed by the national press. The chance to help educate elected officials, the media and the public is critical. Including some public discussion of the plan you're developing will help. While we understand the budgetary realities with crafting a temporary bump, as Dr. Cogle and others discussed in our May 10 meeting, this is also an opportunity to share how the Agency is mindful of using the temporary bump in ways that will support the long-term fixes that potential future funding could address. Thus, between your ARP plan development, the proposed funding for HCBS in Congress, and the stories we can share to underscore the dire need for more Medicaid HCBS funding, there is a time-sensitive opportunity right now for public education that would support our shared goals.

I know you are beyond busy and appreciate all that you and your team are doing!

All my best,
Miriam

s/ Miriam Harmatz

Miriam Harmatz
Advocacy Director & Founder
Florida Health Justice Project