



March 22, 2019

Director Dave Jeppesen
Bureau of Medical Care
Division of Medicaid
Department of Health and Welfare
3232 Elder Street
Boise, Idaho 83705

Submitted via email (cindy.brock@dhw.idaho.gov)

RE: Idaho State Plan Amendments (Transmittal #19-0007; Transmittal #19-0004; Transmittal #19-0005; and Transmittal #19-0006)

Director Jeppesen,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Idaho's State Plan Amendment Application for the state to expand Medicaid up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level (Transmittal #19-0007; Transmittal #19-0004; Transmittal #19-0005; and Transmittal #19-0006).

Cystic Fibrosis (CF) is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects more than 100 adults in Idaho. CF causes the body to produce thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and digestive system, which can lead to life-threatening infections. For those with CF, health care coverage is a necessity and interruptions in coverage can lead to lapses in care, irreversible lung damage, and costly hospitalizations—compromising the health and well-being of those with the disease.

On behalf of people with cystic fibrosis, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation supports state efforts to increase access to adequate, affordable healthcare coverage through Medicaid. The State Plan Amendments, Transmittal #19-0007; Transmittal #19-0004; Transmittal #19-0005; and Transmittal #19-0006 will expand the state's Medicaid program up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level or a family of three with an annual income below \$29,435 per year. The expansion, approved by 61 percent of Idaho voters, will expand healthcare coverage to 62,000 low-income Idaho residents, providing life-saving healthcare to them.

Access to high-quality, specialized care is essential to the health and well-being of people with cystic fibrosis and Medicaid plays an important role in helping people with cystic fibrosis afford the treatments they need to stay healthy. Medicaid provides critical services and helps bridge gaps in care and treatment for people with this complex, rare disease. By increasing eligibility, Idaho will expand this safety net for a vulnerable population, who otherwise might be left access to care.

Medicaid expansion will also improve the financial well-being of Idaho residents. An evaluation of Medicaid expansion in Ohio found that enrollees are less likely to have medical debt than their non-enrolled counterparts.ⁱ Additionally, Medicaid expansion has helped state economies and has been associated with a reduced risk of hospital closures, especially in rural areas.ⁱⁱ

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation appreciates the opportunity to provide input on these important policy changes and fully supports these efforts to expand Medicaid. As the health care landscape continues to evolve, we look forward to working with Idaho to ensure access to high-quality, specialized CF care and improve the lives of all people with cystic fibrosis. Please consider us a resource moving forward.

Thank you,



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CC: Matt Wimmer
Administrator for the Division of Medicaid
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

ⁱ Ohio Department of Medicaid, *2018 Ohio Medicaid Group VII Assessment: Follow-Up to the 2016 Ohio Medicaid Group VIII Assessment*, August 2018. Accessed at:

<http://medicaid.ohio.gov/Portals/0/Resources/Reports/Annual/Group-VIII-Final-Report.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Richard Lindrooth, Marcelo Perrailon, Rose Hardy, and Gregory Tung, "Understanding the Relationship Between Medicaid Expansions and Hospital Closures," *Health Affairs* 27, no. 1 (January 2018): pp. 111-120. Available at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.0976>.