

**NOTICE OF INTENT**

**Department of Health  
Bureau of Health Services Financing  
And  
Office of Aging and Adult Services**

**Home and Community-Based Services Waivers  
Community Choices Waiver  
Direct Support/Service Worker Wages and Bonus Payments  
(LAC 50:XXI.Chapter 95)**

The Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing and the Office of Aging and Adult Services propose to adopt LAC 50:XXI.Chapter 95 in the Medical Assistance Program as authorized by R.S. 36:254 and pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act. This proposed Rule is promulgated in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:950 et seq.

House Concurrent Resolution 127 (HCR 127) of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature requested the department make adjustments in the state Medicaid budget for the purpose of increasing funding more equitably to providers throughout the disabilities services system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved the use of bonus payments for agencies providing personal assistance services to home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver participants under section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan.

In compliance with HCR 127, the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing and the Office for Aging and Adult Services promulgated an Emergency Rule which adopted provisions governing reimbursement in the Community Choices Waiver (CCW) in order to establish wage floor and workforce retention bonus payments for direct support workers and personal assistance service providers along with audit procedures and sanctions (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 48, Number 8). This proposed Rule is being promulgated to continue the provisions of the July 31, 2022 Emergency Rule.

**Title 50**

**PUBLIC HEALTH-MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

**Part XXI. Home and Community-Based Services Waivers  
Subpart 7. Community Choices Waiver**

**Chapter 95. Reimbursement**

**§9503. Direct Support/Service Worker Wages, Other Benefits,  
and Workforce Retention Bonus Payments**

A. Establishment of Direct Support/Service Worker Wage Floor and Other Benefits

1. Personal assistance service (PAS) providers that were providing services on or after October 1, 2021 and employing direct service workers (DSWs) will receive the equivalent of a \$5.50 per hour rate increase.

2. DSWs providing self-direction PAS on or after July 31, 2022 shall be paid a minimum wage floor of \$9 per hour.

3. Adult day health care (ADHC) providers that were providing ADHC services on or after October 1, 2021 and employing ADHC direct support workers will receive a rate increase. The ADHC reimbursement rates shall be rebased resulting in an average increase of \$4.31 per hour (rates differ based on facility specific transportation rate).

4. All PAS and ADHC providers affected by this rate increase shall be subject to passing 70 percent of their rate increases directly to the direct support/service worker in various forms. These forms include a minimum wage floor of \$9 per hour and other wage and non-wage benefits. This wage floor and wage and non-wage benefits are effective for all affected direct support/service workers of any working status, whether full-time or part-time.

5. The rate increase, wage floor and/or wage and non-wage benefits will end March 31, 2025 or when the state's funding authorized under section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 117-002) is exhausted.

6. The Department of Health (LDH) reserves the right to adjust the direct support/service worker wage floor and/or wage and non-wage benefits as needed through appropriate rulemaking promulgation consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act.

B. Establishment of Direct Support/Service Worker  
Workforce Retention Bonus Payments

1. PAS and ADHC providers providing services on or after April 1, 2021 shall receive bonus payments of \$150 per month for each direct support/service worker that worked with participants for that month. These payments will remain in effect for each month thereafter that the direct support service worker works with participants and is still employed with that agency.

2. The PAS and ADHC direct support/service workers providing services on or after April 1, 2021 that worked with participants must receive at least \$125 of this \$150 monthly bonus payment paid to the provider. This bonus payment is effective for all affected direct support/service workers of any working status, whether full-time or part-time.

3. Bonus payments will end March 31, 2025 or when the state's funding authorized under section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 117-002) is exhausted.

4. LDH reserves the right to adjust the amount of the bonus payments paid to the direct support/service worker as needed through appropriate rulemaking promulgation consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act.

C. Audit Procedures for Direct Support/Service Worker Wage Floor, Other Benefits, and Workforce Retention Bonus Payments

1. The wage enhancements, wage and non-wage benefits and bonus payments reimbursed to providers shall be subject to audit by LDH.

2. Providers shall provide to LDH or its representative all requested documentation to verify that they are in compliance with the direct support/service worker wage floor, wage and non-wage benefits and/or bonus payments.

3. This documentation may include, but is not limited to, payroll records, wage and salary sheets, check stubs, copies of unemployment insurance files, etc.

4. Providers shall produce the requested documentation upon request and within the timeframe provided by LDH.

5. Non-compliance or failure to demonstrate that the wage enhancements, wage and non-wage benefits and/or bonus payments were paid directly to direct support/service workers may result in the following:

- a. sanctions; or
- b. disenrollment from the Medicaid Program.

D. Sanctions for Direct Support/Service Worker Wages, Other Benefits, and Workforce Retention Payments

1. Providers will be subject to sanctions or penalties for failure to comply with this Rule or with requests issued by LDH pursuant to this Rule. The severity of such action will depend on the following factors:

a. failure to pass 70 percent of the PAS and ADHC provider rate increases directly to the direct support/service workers in the form of a floor minimum of \$9 per hour and in other wage and non-wage benefits and/or the \$125 monthly bonus payments;

b. the number of employees identified that the PAS and ADHC provider has not passed 70 percent of the provider rate increases directly to the direct support/service workers in the form of a floor minimum of \$9 per hour and in other wage and non-wage benefits and/or the \$125 monthly bonus payments;

d. the persistent failure to not pass 70 percent of the PAS and ADHC provider rate increases directly to the direct support/service workers in the form of a floor minimum of \$9 per hour and in other wage and non-wage benefits and/or the \$125 monthly bonus payments; or

e. failure to provide LDH with any requested documentation or information related to or for the purpose of verifying compliance with this Rule.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing and the Office of Aging and Adult Services, LR 48:

Implementation of the provisions of this Rule may be contingent upon the approval of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), if it is determined that submission to CMS for review and approval is required.

#### **Family Impact Statement**

In compliance with Act 1183 of the 1999 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the impact of this proposed Rule on the family has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule will have a positive impact on family functioning, stability and autonomy as described in R.S. 49:972 by ensuring continued provider participation in the Medicaid Program.

#### **Poverty Impact Statement**

In compliance with Act 854 of the 2012 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the poverty impact of this proposed Rule has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule will have no impact on child, individual, or family poverty in relation to individual or community asset development as described in R.S. 49:973.

#### **Small Business Analysis**

In compliance with the Small Business Protection Act, the economic impact of this proposed Rule on small businesses has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule will have a positive impact on small businesses.

#### **Provider Impact Statement**

In compliance with House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 170 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the provider impact of this proposed Rule has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule will have no impact on the staffing level requirements or qualifications required to provide the same level of service, but may reduce the total direct and indirect cost to the provider to provide the same level of service, and may enhance the provider's ability to provide the same level of service as described in HCR 170, since this proposed Rule increases payments to providers for the services they already render.

#### **Public Comments**

Interested persons may submit written comments to Tara A. LeBlanc, Bureau of Health Services Financing, P.O. Box 91030, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9030. Ms. LeBlanc is responsible for responding to inquiries regarding this proposed Rule. The deadline for submitting written comments is at 4:30 p.m. on October 31, 2022.

#### **Public Hearing**

Interested persons may submit a written request to conduct a public hearing by U.S. mail to the Office of the Secretary ATTN: LDH Rulemaking Coordinator, Post Office Box 629, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629; however, such request must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on October 10, 2022. If the criteria set forth in R.S. 49:953(A)(2)(a) are satisfied, LDH will conduct a public hearing at 9:30 a.m. on October 27, 2022 in Room 118 of the Bienville Building, which is located at 628 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA. To confirm whether or not a public hearing will be held, interested persons should first call Allen Enger at (225) 342-1342 after October 10, 2022. If a public hearing is to be held, all interested persons are invited to attend and present data, views, comments, or arguments, orally or in writing. In the event of a hearing, parking is available to the public in the Galvez Parking Garage, which is located between North Sixth and North Fifth/North and Main Streets (cater-corner from the Bienville Building). Validated parking for the Galvez Garage may be available to public hearing attendees when the parking ticket is presented to LDH staff at the hearing.

Dr. Courtney N. Phillips

Secretary

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT  
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Person  
Preparing  
Statement: Veronica Dent Dept.: Health

Phone: 342-3228 Office: Bureau of Health Services Financing

Return  
Address: P.O. Box 91030 Rule  
Title Home and Community-Based Services Waivers  
Baton Rouge, LA Community Choices Waiver  
Direct Support/Service Worker Wages  
and Bonus Payments

Date Rule  
Takes Effect: July 31, 2022

SUMMARY  
(Use complete sentences)

In accordance with Section 953 of Title 49 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes, there is hereby submitted a fiscal and economic impact statement on the rule proposed for adoption, repeal or amendment. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS SUMMARIZE ATTACHED WORKSHEETS, I THROUGH IV AND WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE LOUISIANA REGISTER WITH THE PROPOSED AGENCY RULE.

I. ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION COSTS (SAVINGS) TO STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS (Summary)

It is anticipated that implementation of this proposed rule will result in estimated programmatic costs of approximately \$5,737,695 for FY 22-23 and \$2,349,073 for FY 23-24. It is anticipated that \$972 (\$486 SGF and \$486 FED) will be expended in FY 22-23 for the state's administrative expense for promulgation of this proposed and final rule.

II. ESTIMATED EFFECT ON REVENUE COLLECTIONS OF STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS (Summary)

It is anticipated that implementation of this proposed rule will increase federal revenue collections by approximately \$12,782,349 for FY 22-23 and \$4,773,647 for FY 23-24. It is anticipated that \$486 will be collected for the federal share of the expense for promulgation of the proposed and final rule.

III. ESTIMATED COSTS AND/OR ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO DIRECTLY AFFECTED PERSONS, SMALL BUSINESSES, OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS (Summary)

This proposed rule continues the provisions of the July 31, 2022 Emergency Rule, which established a wage floor and workforce retention bonus payments in the Community Choices Waiver (CCW) for direct support workers and personal assistance service providers, along with audit procedures and sanctions. The proposed rule complies with HCR 127 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature and with CMS requirements for the use of bonus payments under Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. These increased payments will ensure that CCW providers continue rendering services to waiver participants in the Medicaid Program. Implementation of this proposed rule is anticipated to increase expenditures for CCW services by approximately \$18,519,072 for FY 22-23 and \$7,122,720 for FY 23-24.

IV. ESTIMATED EFFECT ON COMPETITION AND EMPLOYMENT (Summary)

This rule has no known effect on competition and employment.



Signature of Agency Head or Designee

Tara A. LeBlanc, Medicaid Executive Director  
Typed Name & Title of Agency Head or Designee

September 6, 2022  
Date of Signature



Legislative Fiscal Officer or Designee

9/6/22  
Date of Signature

**FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT  
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

The following information is required in order to assist the Legislative Fiscal Office in its review of the fiscal and economic impact statement and to assist the appropriate legislative oversight subcommittee in its deliberation on the proposed rule.

- A. Provide a brief summary of the content of the rule (if proposed for adoption, or repeal) or a brief summary of the change in the rule (if proposed for amendment). Attach a copy of the notice of intent and a copy of the rule proposed for initial adoption or repeal (or, in the case of a rule change, copies of both the current and proposed rules with amended portions indicated).

This proposed rule continues the provisions of the July 31, 2022 Emergency Rule, which established a wage floor and workforce retention bonus payments in the Community Choices Waiver (CCW) for direct support workers and personal assistance service providers along, with audit procedures and sanctions.

- B. Summarize the circumstances, which require this action. If the Action is required by federal regulation, attach a copy of the applicable regulation.

House Concurrent Resolution 127 (HCR 127) of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature requested the department make adjustments in the state Medicaid budget for the purpose of increasing funding more equitably to providers throughout the disability system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved the use of bonus payments for agencies providing personal assistance services to home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver participants under section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan.

In compliance with HCR 127, the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing and the Office of Aging and Adult Services promulgated an Emergency Rule which adopted provisions governing reimbursement in the Community Choices Waiver (CCW) in order to establish a wage floor and workforce retention bonus payments for direct support workers and personal assistance service providers, along with audit procedures and sanctions (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 48, Number 8). This proposed Rule is being promulgated to continue the provisions of the July 31, 2022 Emergency Rule.

- C. Compliance with Act 11 of the 1986 First Extraordinary Session

- (1) Will the proposed rule change result in any increase in the expenditure of funds? If so, specify amount and source of funding.

Yes, it is anticipated that implementation of this proposed rule will result in increased programmatic costs to the Medicaid program of approximately \$18,520,044 for FY 22-23 and \$7,122,720 for FY 23-24. In FY 22-23 \$972 is included for the state's administrative expense for promulgation of this proposed and final rule.

- (2) If the answer to (1) above is yes, has the Legislature specifically appropriated the funds necessary for the associated expenditure increase?

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes. If yes, attach documentation.

(b)   X   NO. If no, provide justification as to why this rule change should be published at this time

Act 199 of the 2022 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature allocated funds to the Medical Vendor Program for payments to providers and the operation of the Medicaid Program, and thereby, authorizes the expenditure of these funds. Implementation of this proposed rule will increase payments for services rendered to CCW participants and ensure providers continue participating in the Medicaid Program.

**FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT  
WORKSHEET**

**I. A. COSTS OR SAVINGS TO STATE AGENCIES RESULTING FROM THE ACTION PROPOSED**

1. What is the anticipated increase (decrease) in costs to implement the proposed action?

<b>COSTS</b>	<b>FY 23</b>	<b>FY 24</b>	<b>FY 25</b>
Personal Services			
Operating Expenses	\$972	\$0	\$0
Professional Services			
Other Charges	\$18,519,072	\$7,122,720	\$0
Equipment			
Major Repairs & Constr.			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,520,044</b>	<b>\$7,122,720</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>POSITIONS (#)</b>			

2. Provide a narrative explanation of the costs or savings shown in "A. 1.", including the increase or reduction in workload or additional paperwork (number of new forms, additional documentation, etc.) anticipated as a result of the implementation of the proposed action. Describe all data, assumptions, and methods used in calculating these costs.

The expenses reflected above are the estimated increases in programmatic expenditures in the Medicaid program. In FY 22-23, \$648 will be spent for the state's administrative expense for promulgation of this proposed rule and the final rule.

3. Sources of funding for implementing the proposed rule or rule change.

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>FY 23</b>	<b>FY 24</b>	<b>FY 25</b>
State General Fund	\$5,737,695	\$2,349,073	\$0
Agency Self-Generated			
Dedicated			
Federal Funds	\$12,782,349	\$4,773,647	\$0
Other (Specify)			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,520,044</b>	<b>\$7,122,720</b>	<b>\$0</b>

4. Does your agency currently have sufficient funds to implement the proposed action? If not, how and when do you anticipate obtaining such funds?

Yes, sufficient funds are available to implement this rule. The American Rescue Plan Act provided a 10% enhanced FMAP on all home and community based services for the period of 4/1/21 through 3/31/22.

**B. COST OR SAVINGS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS RESULTING FROM THE ACTION PROPOSED.**

1. Provide an estimate of the anticipated impact of the proposed action on local governmental units, including adjustments in workload and paperwork requirements. Describe all data, assumptions and methods used in calculating this impact.

This proposed rule has no known impact on local governmental units.

2. Indicate the sources of funding of the local governmental unit, which will be affected by these costs or savings.

There is no known impact on the sources of local governmental unit funding

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT  
WORKSHEET

II. EFFECT ON REVENUE COLLECTIONS OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

A. What increase (decrease) in revenues can be anticipated from the proposed action?

REVENUE INCREASE/DECREASE	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25
State General Fund			
Agency Self-Generated			
Dedicated Funds*			
Federal Funds	\$12,782,349	\$4,773,647	\$0
Local Funds			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,782,349</b>	<b>\$4,773,647</b>	<b>\$0</b>

\*Specify the particular fund being impacted.

B. Provide a narrative explanation of each increase or decrease in revenues shown in "A." Describe all data, assumptions, and methods used in calculating these increases or decreases.

The amounts reflected above are the estimated increase in the federal share of programmatic expenditures for the Medicaid program. In FY 22-23, \$486 will be collected for the federal share of the administrative expense for promulgation of this proposed rule and the final

**FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT  
WORKSHEET**

**III. COSTS AND/OR ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO DIRECTLY AFFECTED PERSONS, SMALL BUSINESSES, OR NONGOVERNMENTAL GROUPS**

- A. What persons, small businesses, or non-governmental groups would be directly affected by the proposed action? For each, provide an estimate and a narrative description of any effect on costs, including workload adjustments and additional paperwork (number of new forms, additional documentation, etc.), they may have to incur as a result of the proposed action.

This proposed rule continues the provisions of the July 31, 2022 Emergency Rule, which established a wage floor and workforce retention bonus payments in the Community Choices Waiver (CCW) for direct support workers and personal assistance service providers, along with audit procedures and sanctions. The proposed rule complies with HCR 127 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature and with CMS requirements for the use of bonus payments under Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. These increased payments will ensure that CCW providers continue rendering services to waiver participants in the Medicaid Program.

- B. Also provide an estimate and a narrative description of any impact on receipts and/or income resulting from this rule or rule change to these groups.

Implementation of this proposed rule is anticipated to increase expenditures for CCW services by approximately \$18,519,072 for FY 22-23 and \$7,122,720 for FY 23-24.

**IV. EFFECTS ON COMPETITION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Identify and provide estimates of the impact of the proposed action on competition and employment in the public and private sectors. Include a summary of any data, assumptions and methods used in making these estimates.

This rule has no known effect on competition and employment.