

WEST VIRGINIA
Department of



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State Plan Amendment Could Revamp Medicaid

Governor Joe Manchin has announced that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has approved a State Plan amendment for West Virginia's Medicaid program.

"Approval of this plan moves Medicaid to a model that emphasizes personal empowerment and responsibility," Manchin said today at the Capitol where the final plan amendment was signed by Governor and Gordon Woodrow, regional director of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

All groups the Medicaid program must cover by statute and all those who were eligible before the approval of the plan amendment will continue to be covered. There is a four-year implementation plan on Medicaid redesign.

"We plan on starting small and building on our successes," said Nancy Atkins, commissioner of the Bureau for Medical Services, the state Medicaid office that is located within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. "The new plan will ensure that participants receive the right care at the right time by the right provider through care coordination."

The new plan, which will cover about 160,000 Medicaid recipients the first year it is implemented, will include a Healthy Rewards Account that will allow Medicaid members to purchase health-related services that are not covered by Medicaid. Members desiring an enhanced Medicaid package will be

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asked to sign a personal responsibility contract acknowledging that they have the power to choose a healthy lifestyle. This agreement is fairly unique to West Virginia's reform package.

Medicaid costs the state \$2.3 billion in 2005 in state and federal dollars. Rolls have grown by more than 37,000 since 2001, but we have not increased eligibility.

Clay County will be the first county in which the plan is implemented.