

UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

Since the American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law in March, Mass-ALA has been advocating for increased rates and increased investments in programs that facilitate assisted living affordability, increased access, and coordinated care. Following up on the August news of a 10% rate increase for Group Adult Foster Care (GAFC), we are sharing information on other programs impacted by the state's allocation of federal ARPA funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). If you missed the August Member Update on GAFC, it is linked [here](#).

In October, MassHealth released Managed Care Entity Bulletin 72, which provided further details on ARPA-funded rate increases for Integrated Care Plans including PACE and SCO. The bulletin, which contains further details on the use of funds and specific services covered, is linked [here](#).

At least 90% of the enhanced funds must be used to support direct care and support staff, including frontline workers and direct care workers, but excluding executive management and administrators. Providers will be required to submit spending reports to EOHHS. The guidelines for allowable uses and reporting will align across the HCBS programs included in the rate increase, and more information can be found on the state website, linked [here](#).

At this point, all rate increases are effective through December 31, 2021. Spending reports and attestations will be due July 31, 2022. MassHealth anticipates extending temporary rate increases for HCBS and Behavioral Health services through June 30, 2022, and we are awaiting confirmation of this and further information to become available in the next few months.

PACE

Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) organizations are "encouraged to increase payment rates by 10% over rates in effect as of June 30, 2021, for providers external to but contracted with a PACE organization to provide certain services" to be used for workforce retention and recruitment as part of the state's Round 1 Investments of the ARPA funding.

PACE is also being included in planning for the state's Round 2 Investments for ARPA funds. Starting in January 2022, the state will make an estimated investment of \$2.5M in PACE, with the goal of enhancing services and care models. "Funds will be used for short-term rate enhancements to PACE Organizations for infrastructure and capital enhancements that promote sustainability and expansion into new unserved and/or under-served service areas to ensure broader access to the PACE care model." More information on

the Round 2 Investments, including those for PACE, can be found [here](#).

Senior Care Options (SCO)

Bulletin 72 also directs the Senior Care Options (SCO) organizations to increase the payment rates for certain services by 10% over the plan's contracted rates in effect as of June 30, 2021. Integrated care plans must pay the increased rate for services delivered on or after the rate increase effective date, including claims submitted prior to the effective date of the bulletin, and must ensure that providers expend all funds received as a result of this enhanced rate by June 30, 2022.

Mass-ALA is continuing to advocate for extensions of temporary rate and funding increases, as well as permanent rate increases, and we will keep you updated on these issues.

If you have any questions, please contact us at Mass-ALA@mass-ala.org

**The information provided in this COVID-19 update is solely for general informational purposes to assist in understanding the evolving guidance regarding the current COVID 19 public health threat. It is not intended to be a primary public health or medical resource but is provided as a clearinghouse for or compilation of various guidance issued by official and related sources.*

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