

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

DATE: May 16, 2023

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

SUBJECT: A report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting approval to reallocate \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the Milwaukee Premium Assistance Program (MPAP) to the Medicaid Re-Enrollment Support project to support Milwaukee County residents at risk of losing health insurance coverage

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

DHHS is requesting American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding totaling \$500,000 for the Medicaid Re-Enrollment Support project. The request intends to repurpose funding originally allocated to the Milwaukee Premium Assistance Program (MPAP). While the Milwaukee Premium Assistance Program project is not moving forward, the proposed Medicaid Re-Enrollment Support project is designed to address similar needs that MPAP intended to meet. The Milwaukee Premium Assistance Program could not move forward because the collective impact team was not able to secure from various stakeholders the full budget total of \$3.4M+ that was required to make the project feasible for 2 years.

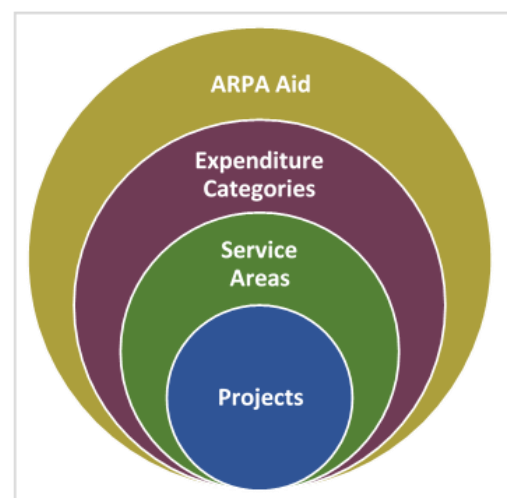
POLICY

Milwaukee County Board file 21-555: "A resolution to create a Task Force to review and recommend funding allocations to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for monies received by the County in the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021".

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County received \$183 million between 2021-24 in federal ARPA aid. These funds are intended to allow flexibility for jurisdictions to meet local needs and fund local solutions to support families, small

Diagram A: Illustration of Terms



businesses, impacted industries, essential workers and the communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

The following proposal was unanimously approved by the ARPA Task Force (vote 6 to 0) at its meeting on May 11, 2023.

Project Name: Medicaid Re-Enrollment Support

Overview of the project:

The goal of the Medicaid Re-Enrollment Support project is to support Milwaukee County residents at risk of losing health insurance coverage in re-enrolling in Medicaid or finding alternative coverage during the Medicaid unwinding period (June 2023 – May 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the health of Milwaukee County residents across a number of health indicators. To counteract this anticipated issue, the Federal government in 2020 created a program that has allowed Medicaid enrollees to be continuously enrolled without the need to re-enroll annually. The continuous re-enrollment is ending this summer with the end of the COVID-19 Federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) in spring 2023.

More than 400,000 Milwaukee County residents are enrolled in Medicaid, comprising over 44% of the population as of February 2023. All of these residents are at risk of losing health insurance coverage if they do not or are unable to re-enroll in Medicaid. Up to a quarter of those residents (90,000+) may no longer be eligible for Medicaid and will require sourcing alternative insurance. The State will begin to require renewal of residents starting in June 2023, with residents required to renew during one of the specified months between June 2024 and May 2025.

The reason this one-time event is particularly precarious is that: (a) many of these residents have not needed to re-enroll in 3 years and may not be aware that it's required nor how to do so, (b) the number of residents that will require renewal and support in doing so is significantly higher than typical processes, (c) there will likely be a lot of confusion about when and how to re-enroll. The result may be that vulnerable residents may discover they no longer have insurance at the moment they have a medical need, or a resident may not seek out health care services because of the confusion of this Medicaid unwinding.

This issue is likely to affect Milwaukee County's residents who identify as Black or Hispanic the most, given what data tells us about who is currently enrolled in Medicaid. The top zip codes of current enrollees include: 53218, 53209, 53216, 53206, as well as 53215, 53204, 53221.

The total funding amount requested is \$500,000. Given that the Medicaid unwinding period runs between June 2023 and May 2024, spending is projected to take place in a linear fashion during that time period.

The project's funding is allocated across several categories of intervention - \$100,000 to increase awareness of the issue that builds on tactics funded by other entities, \$300,000 to

fund entities or contractors to provide direct support to residents to re-enroll or find alternative health insurance; \$40,000 to provide trainings to staff and other community organizations on how to help residents re-enroll. Finally, included is \$35,000 for a variety of materials, and \$25,000 for DHHS's administrative support of this work.

The Department has been in partnership discussions the County's Office of Emergency Management, municipal health departments, the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership (MHCP) and Milwaukee Enrollment Network (MKEN), Covering Wisconsin, and the State's Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MiLES).

Supporting this project aligns with the County's vision of achieving racial equity and health by ensuring vulnerable residents continue to maintain health insurance coverage; it also reinforces the No Wrong Door philosophy by placing re-enrollment resources at locations where residents seek help.

Budget Request:

Expense Item	Description	Total Cost
Awareness Campaign	Partnering with Inpower and other communications firms to expand the reach of a variety of social, text, TV/radio, and physical campaigns to raise awareness of need to re-enroll in Medicaid throughout the year	\$100,000
Agencies Targeting Aging and Disabilities Populations	Partnering with known agencies that today work directly with older residents or residents with different abilities that have a track record of being able to add capacity quickly in the field	\$150,000
Limited Term Contractors	Partnering with a contracted agency to bring on several limited-term contractors who may reside within County facilities and help residents who come to our programs to re-enroll in Medicaid or explore alternative health insurance	\$150,000
Training of Staff and other Providers	Training to DHHS staff, contracted staff, and community partners in helping residents re-enroll in Medicaid, understand alternative options if no longer eligible for Medicaid; the County intends to partner with Covering Wisconsin, a non-profit for a part of this effort	\$40,000
Materials and Technology	Funding for flyers, posters, and other physical materials to improve awareness; technology to support staff's ability to help residents re-enroll in Medicaid in the field	\$35,000
Administrative Support	Staff time to oversee the implementation of this project, to coordinate and adapt tactics over time	\$25,000
	TOTAL	\$500,000

DHHS would like to enter into sole source contracts with Inpower for \$100,000 for communication and outreach and Covering Wisconsin for staff and provider training for \$40,000. Both agencies are currently performing work in their respective areas across the community for Medicaid re-enrollment. Sole source contracts would allow DHHS to leverage the expertise of these vendors in these specific areas.

Budget by Fiscal Year:

FY 2023	FY2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	Total
\$300,000	\$200,000	\$	\$	\$

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approve \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the Medicaid Re-Enrollment Support project. DHHS further recommends executing sole source contracts with Inpower for \$100,000 for communications services and Covering Wisconsin for \$40,000 for staff and provider training.

FISCAL EFFECT

This resolution would allocate \$500,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act funds to the specific program above. See attached fiscal note.

PREPARED BY:

Steve Gorodetskiy, Strategic Initiatives Director, Department of Health and Human Services

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director – Department of Health and Human Services

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the strategic plan:

3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities

3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Medicaid Re-Enrollment Support Proposal

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Liz Sumner, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Shawn Rolland, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Sr Budget and Management Analyst, DAS-Strategy, Performance & Budget