



*Commonwealth of Virginia*

*Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Virginia Medicaid Approved for Housing and Employment Supports**

*~ Members with serious behavioral and physical health  
needs will be eligible for benefit ~*

**Richmond** – The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) today announced that the agency has received federal approval to offer housing and employment support services for Medicaid members who have significant behavioral and physical health needs.

“Individuals with serious physical and mental health conditions often face additional stresses due to housing instability and unemployment,” said Secretary of Health and Human Resources Daniel Carey, MD, MHCM. “In turn, the loss of their home and their job can lead to deteriorating health outcomes. By addressing these critical housing and employment needs, we can help to break this cycle of suffering and offer hope for better health and a better quality of life for individuals across our Commonwealth.”

The new benefit will become available in July 2022 for Virginia Medicaid members ages 18 and older, contingent on approval and funding by Governor Ralph Northam and the General Assembly. The new services will include interventions to prevent eviction, transition support for

individuals moving from an institution into the community, assistance to obtain an industry certification and job coaching.

“Home and community-based services are essential elements in our work to develop a full array of supports for Medicaid members facing the most intensive health challenges,” said Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources Vanessa Walker Harris, MD. “We know that social determinants of health, including housing and employment, are key to ensuring that these individuals can live independently and enjoy opportunities for self-fulfillment.”

The Virginia Medicaid agency will offer housing and employment services through its managed care program to individuals who meet criteria based on health needs and risk factors, including diagnosis of a developmental disability, serious mental illness or substance use disorder; chronic homelessness; a history of institutional admissions; and frequent emergency department visits.

“We are pleased to receive approval from our federal partners to offer cost-effective services that will assist individuals in securing and retaining employment so they can live in their communities rather than in an institutional setting,” said Karen Kimsey, DMAS Director. “This new benefit will help to increase the availability of these vital supports throughout Virginia and create new and meaningful choices for individuals and their families.”

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved the new benefit through a section 1115 demonstration waiver. The approved benefit will create a statewide supportive housing program that builds on the existing programs and partnership with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, and Virginia Housing.

The employment supports benefit will expand on programs established by the Virginia Workforce Centers, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.