



## Allow Service Members to Retain their Earned Priority for Receiving Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waivers

*States can alleviate barriers experienced by military families who lose access to valuable medical benefits as a result of transitioning out of the state on military orders.*

**KEY MESSAGE:** State Medicaid eligibility requirements and lengthy waiting lists can hinder military families from obtaining supplemental support for members with special needs during critical transition periods. States can assist military families by facilitating their ability to earn the same priorities afforded to every eligible state resident.



### DISCUSSION POINTS:

States can assist separating service members and their families by recognizing that the mobile military lifestyle hinders reasonable participation in state Medicaid options and waiver programs.

- By states extending active duty service members' use of their state of legal residence (i.e., where they pay taxes, vote, register their vehicles, hold a driver's license, etc.), they can register their family member with special needs for a Medicaid waiver.
  - Enrollment for waivers in their resident state would allow the family member to progress along with other state citizens until he or she becomes eligible to receive benefits.
  - Eligibility status is retained as long as the service member maintains the state as his/her legal resident and returns to the state after military separation.<sup>1</sup>The family member either receives credit for time on the list or begins receiving benefits when the family returns home.
- As an alternative, states may consider modifying one of their existing waiver categories (such as individuals with critical need) to include military families transitioning out of the military in order to expedite services through home- and community-based services.
  - This option may also facilitate expediting services to family members with special needs during an assignment where a family member may have lost services provided by the previous state as a result of receiving a government-directed relocation.

The Department of Defense established the TRICARE ECHO program to provide \$36,000 of additional coverage for active duty sponsored family members with condition-specific needs. However, they lose ECHO support upon separation/retirement of the sponsor from the military. Additionally, when families transition out of the military, they generally have to start the entire Medicaid application process in the state in which they settle, resulting in long waiting periods without services. Consequently, families incur significant debt while paying for a family member's care.

<sup>1</sup>Joint Federal Travel Regulation paragraph Ch 5 Part A-U5012-I extends the final travel benefits up to six years from effective date of separation.