



**State of Vermont**  
**Department of Vermont Health Access**

Office of the Commissioner  
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[Phone] 802-879-5900

*Agency of Human Services*

April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

Re: Updated COVID-19 Medicaid Retainer Cover Letter & Process

Dear Health Care Provider,

The Agency of Human Services (AHS) is considering requests for immediate cash flow assistance from Medicaid-enrolled, Vermont-based (or border) health care providers experiencing financial distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The provider types listed in the attached guidance are invited to apply for a COVID-19-specific Medicaid Retainer for April 2020. Requests will be prioritized based on available funds. Additional funding mechanisms are either existing or under development for organization types not listed (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes, Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, private non-medical institutions).

The Agency will accept applications through April 21, 2020 at 5:00PM. Applications and any questions about the application process should be submitted electronically to [AHS.COVID19Financial@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.COVID19Financial@vermont.gov). Entities submitting either inquiries or applications will receive a message acknowledging receipt. In addition, the Agency will develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions and other resources that may assist providers in this process. These will be posted to the DVHA website when available: <https://dvha.vermont.gov/covid-19>.

This COVID-19-specific Medicaid Retainer option is one of several provider financial relief mechanisms that the Agency is pursuing as part of a multi-phased plan with tracks for different types of provider organizations. The Agency will continue to assess the needs of all our providers and the various funding mechanisms that may become available to the State; the Agency of Human Services will respond accordingly with updated guidance and information about emerging opportunities.

Finally, Medicaid-participating providers are also encouraged to reference Vermont Medicaid's [continuing coverage for telemedicine and temporary new coverage](#) for medically necessary and clinically appropriate services delivered by telephone (see also this [guidance](#)).

Thank you for your work to care for Vermonters during this unprecedented public health crisis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cory Gustafson".

Cory Gustafson, Commissioner  
Department of Vermont Health Access

**COVID-19-specific Medicaid Retainer for April 2020**  
**Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) – UPDATED April 3, 2020**

<b>Objective</b>	To provide prompt cash flow assistance to health care providers serving Vermont Medicaid members to ensure continued operations through the month of April, prior to implementing a more predictable reimbursement model to address cash flow throughout the State of Emergency.
<b>Provider Organizations Eligible for Retainer</b>	<p>As of March 27, 2020, the following types of Medicaid-enrolled, Vermont-based (or border) provider organizations are eligible to apply for the COVID-19-specific Medicaid Retainer <u>for April 2020</u> (“Retainer”):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Care Practices</li> <li>• Federally Qualified Health Centers</li> <li>• Rural Health Clinics</li> <li>• Home Health/Hospice Agencies</li> <li>• Area Agencies on Aging</li> <li>• Adult Day Providers</li> <li>• Ambulance Providers</li> <li>• Dental Practices</li> <li>• Enhanced Residential Care (ERC) Providers</li> <li>• Assistive Community Care Services (ACCS) Providers</li> <li>• Independent Specialist Practices (including licensed mental health clinicians and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) providers)</li> <li>• Any other provider organization type not listed in the note below</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Additional funding mechanisms are either existing or under development for organization types listed here: hospitals, nursing homes, Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, private non-medical institutions.</i></p>
<b>Documentation Required for Retainer Application</b>	<p>To ensure an efficient review, please submit an <b>Index</b> or <b>Table of Contents</b> of the items below to orient reviewers to the contents of the application package.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A <a href="#">completed and signed application checklist</a><sup>1</sup> (linked here and full link in footnote);</li> <li>2. Financial information and other detail to support the requested amount of relief</li> <li>3. Narrative summary of practice changes and other activities underway in response to COVID-19</li> <li>4. Data on service volume changes and data on organizational cost changes in response to COVID-19</li> <li>5. Summary of payer mix of 1) patient panel and 2) revenue (including Vermont Medicaid, specifically)</li> <li>6. Anticipated change in revenue due to losses from Medicare and commercial payers, including detail on how the estimate was calculated</li> <li>7. Two most recent bank statements to demonstrate cash on hand</li> <li>8. List of any other potential sources of funding currently available <u>and</u> potentially available in next 6-8 weeks (e.g. assets, grants, investments, endowments, etc.)</li> </ol>
<b>Retainer Application Process and Timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications should be submitted <u>electronically as a single PDF document</u> to <a href="mailto:AHS.COVID19Financial@vermont.gov">AHS.COVID19Financial@vermont.gov</a> between March 27, 2020 and April 21, 2020.</li> <li>• Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received by a multi-disciplinary team from the Agency of Human Services, and will be prioritized based on availability of funds.</li> <li>• The team will make funding recommendations to the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services. The Secretary’s decisions will be communicated electronically to the identified Point of Contact. Decisions shall not be subject to administrative or judicial review.</li> <li>• The Agency will work to issue a decision within 5 business days of application receipt. This timeline may be adjusted in the event that a high volume of applications is received. If an extended timeline is required, this will be communicated to the identified Point of Contact.</li> <li>• Retainer funding will be issued in the form of a lump-sum payment.</li> </ul>
<b>Conditions of Retainer Funding</b>	<p>Eligibility to receive Retainer funding is conditioned on the provider’s agreement to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider will continue participation with Vermont Medicaid, and continue to deliver services to Vermont Medicaid members throughout the State of Emergency.</li> <li>• Provider will continue to submit claims for services rendered on behalf of Vermont Medicaid members.</li> <li>• Provider (if eligible to apply) will submit a good faith and complete application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund for monetary aid or other relief under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, and will notify AHS immediately of any relief awarded.</li> <li>• Retainer funding may be subject to recoupment as part of one or more reconciliations of total Medicaid and other funds made available to providers during or in light of the COVID-19 crisis, including but not limited to ordinary course fee-for-service claims payments and forthcoming COVID-19 reimbursement model payments (currently under development and targeted for May 2020 implementation).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://dvha.vermont.gov/sites/dvha/files/documents/News/COVID-19-specific%20Medicaid%20Retainer%20Application%20Checklist%2004.03.2020%20FINAL.pdf>