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Expanding Access to Peer Support and Recovery Coaching Services through Variances and Waivers

Prospective providers of Peer Support and Recovery Coaching services, in addition to having lived experience with substance use disorders, may also have alcohol- and drug-related convictions on their criminal records, which would prevent them from obtaining a criminal history background check clearance. To increase access to these services, the Department is expanding its program of granting waivers/variances that allow these providers to deliver Peer Support and Recovery Coaching services to Medicaid participants through the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan (IBHP).

Medicaid has amended its administrative rules in IDAPA 16.03.09, Medicaid Basic Plan Benefits, to allow granting of variances to these providers. Changes to Section 009, Criminal History and Background Check Requirements, make the Medicaid variance option available to providers who have applied for but have been denied criminal history check clearance, as set forth in IDAPA 16.05.06, Criminal History and Background Checks. All other Criminal History Unit (CHU) requirements for prospective providers remain in place, including rules that prohibit enrollment of providers that appear on the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Exclusion list, the Idaho Medicaid Provider Outstanding Debt/Termination List, and the List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE). A Medicaid variance allows the provider to deliver Peer Support and Recovery Coaching services only.

After July 1, 2021, the amended chapter of Medicaid rules is expected to be available for download at the following link: <https://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/16/160309.pdf>.

The Divisions of Medicaid and Behavioral Health are working together to unify the Department's process for providers to apply for and obtain waivers and variances. Providers having an existing Background Check Waiver approval letter from the Division of Behavioral Health dated before July 1, 2021, should contact Medicaid at 1-866-681-7062 if they are interested in providing Peer Support and Recovery Coaching services reimbursed through Medicaid.

Providers whose applications for waivers/variances are approved will receive an approval letter from the Division of Behavioral Health documenting their eligibility to provide Peer Support and Recovery Coaching services to Medicaid enrollees.

To learn more about background check waivers/variances and how to apply, please visit the [Behavioral Health Service Providers](#) page on the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare website.