

November 30, 2023

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## OHA updates plan for climate benefits while awaiting federal approval

*After federal rules posed added restrictions to the state's plan, OHA and state partners pursued new avenues to get devices to OHP members*

*Portland, Ore.* – Today Oregon Health Authority (OHA) announced the state will update its plan for how climate-related devices are distributed to eligible Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members prior to a forecasted weather-related emergency. The benefits are projected to begin in March 2024, pending federal government approval.

OHA initially proposed introducing climate benefits for OHP members in January 2024 as part of Oregon's 1115 Medicaid waiver, which uses federal dollars to provide climate devices like air conditioners, air filtration devices, and portable power supplies to eligible Medicaid members; however, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) informed the state that distributing climate devices prior to an emergency declaration would not be possible.

"The limitation would have severely restricted distribution of climate devices, so we sought feedback from state partners and a more flexible approach," said Dave Baden, interim director of OHA. "We look forward to continuing to work with CMS and moving toward final approval."

"Our first priority always is our community," said Sean Jessup, Chief Executive Officer, Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO). "We're laser-focused on getting the right resources to our OHP members, particularly in times of greater need. We're encouraged that this plan will even better serve people."

Before the new benefits launch, CCO-enrolled OHP members can [contact their CCO](#) to see if climate supports are available through "flexible services" (also called health related services). If a member has OHP but is not sure which CCO they are in, they can call the Client Services Unit at 1-800-273-0557 or email: [Ask.OHP@odhsoha.oregon.gov](mailto:Ask.OHP@odhsoha.oregon.gov).

Additional details will be provided in the coming weeks. Information about Oregon's 1115 Medicaid waiver is currently available on OHA's [web site](#), via the [waiver newsletter](#), and through webinars in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).