July 2026
Public Policy & Government Relations (PPGR) Update
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Introduction

We are delighted to share the July edition of the PPGR monthly update, which provides updates about HR 1 implementation, New York State Medicaid, as well as the Amida Care led July 15th advocacy day. As you read through this update, we invite you to learn about how we continue to engage in action as we enjoy the summer.

Contents

HR1 Implementation - Page 2

UHF Medicaid Conference - Page 3

July 15 Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. - Page 4

PPGR Roundup - Page 5

Additional Readings - Page 5

HR1 Implementation

In the June update, PPGR provided information about the latest Medicaid guidance from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services' (CMS) policy on HR1 implementation. To recap, on January 1, 2027, many of the HR1 Medicaid provisions will go into effect. We are particularly concerned about the new Medicaid Community Engagement (Work) Requirements. The CMS guidance, called an Interim Final Rule (IFR), makes getting an exemption from the work requirements harder for those who need them. Amida Care continues to advocate for HIV, substance use disorder (SUD) and serious mental illness (SMI) to be exempted from the work requirements. The IFR would put that exemption at risk, because it calls on people with serious and complex medical conditions such as HIV, SUD and SMI to also prove that they cannot work.

Comments on the IFR are being accepted by CMS until July 31, 2026. Amida Care and over 20,000 other interested parties have already submitted comments. Several coalitions that Amida Care is a part of will also submit comments. Some include AIDS United, Federal AIDS Policy Partnership (FAPP), Association of Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP) and Public Health Plan Association (PHP).

Additionally, the Democratic caucuses of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate have weighed in. Both caucuses sent letters to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), asking for the IFR to be reconsidered. During our July 15th advocacy day, we brought the letter to the entire New York delegation, Democrats and Republicans. Our interactions that day helped to ensure that all members of the Democratic Caucuses from New York State have signed the letter. We continue to meet with and encourage New York's Republican members of the House to speak out about the IFR.

As reported in the June report, New York State is among the 26 states that have sued CMS to stop the implementation of the IFR. On July 29, 2026 a federal court in Massachusetts denied a request by the states to immediately stop implementation of the IFR, while the issue is being decided in the courts. The court directed the parties to submit, by August 5, an expedited schedule for deciding the merits of the case on summary judgment prior to January 1, 2027.

We expect that New York State Medicaid will continue to advance implementation of work requirements, including sending notices to members about Medicaid work requirements starting in mid-August.

UHF Medicaid Conference

On July 30 Amida Care participated in the United Hospital Fund Medicaid Conference in New York City.

Medicaid Director Amir Bassiri gave the keynote address. He spoke about New York State Medicaid's priorities, and the latest on important decisions that the program must make over the coming year. He shared that New York is reapplying to CMS to continue the 1115 waiver program. The 1115 waiver is a mechanism which New York is using to pilot changes to its Medicaid program. Under the program, New York has implemented new programming to address unmet social needs and improve access to quality care. CMS must approve any programming pursued under this program.

The Medicaid Director was not able to speak extensively about HR1 implementation because of the lawsuit mentioned in the section above. He outlined four priorities and commitments for the Medicaid program:

1. Improving the total health and wellbeing of New Yorkers
2. Investing in evidence-based care to improve outcomes and lower costs
3. Harnessing and enabling local momentum to meet state goals
4. Aligning incentive across managed care providers and community programs

July 15th Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C.

On Wednesday July 15th, Amida Care led a successful advocacy day in Washington D.C. with **60 people strong!** We were also joined by several community-based organizations including *Callen-Lorde*, *Housing Works*, *Harlem United*, *Acacia*, *Apicha*, *Sun River Health*, *Alliance for Positive Change* and *Latino Commission on AIDS*. Three national groups that do work in New York also joined us for some meetings - *AIDS United*, *Families USA* and *Positive Women's Network-USA*.

Throughout the day, we had contact with every member of New York's Congressional Delegation (House and Senate). We had direct meetings with 20 representatives and both New York Senators. We even dropped off information about our advocacy day with the 6 offices where we did not have scheduled meetings.

We brought a clear message to the New York Congressional delegation. We called on every New York representative to work with their colleagues to:

- **Sustain federal support** for critical HIV prevention services, reducing disparities, and advancing our shared goal of ending the HIV epidemic.
- **Protect Medicaid:** We called on lawmakers to fix or repeal H.R.1 and address its harmful cuts to Medicaid. These reductions will have significant consequences for the health and well-being of New Yorkers who rely on Medicaid for essential healthcare services, including HIV prevention.
- **Stand with the LGBTQ+ Community:** We voiced our strong opposition to the recent attacks on transgender healthcare and the broader LGBTQ+ community from the Federal government, and we emphasized the importance of protecting access to gender affirming care, ensuring that every person can live with dignity, safety, and equal opportunity.
- **Invest in Community Health** by ensuring that community-based health centers have access to funding to serve communities.
- **Support President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)** by directing funding to these vitally important programs.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the day was the opportunity to engage with both Republican and Democratic offices. While perspectives differed on issues, our conversations were thoughtful, respectful, and focused on the real-world impact that policy decisions have on individuals, families, and communities throughout New York. The meetings were ladened with lived experiences and challenges.

PPGR Round Up

Thank you for reading this July update. We hope that the success of the July 15th action serves as inspiration for us all to continue to act!

Additional Reading

Trump's HHS abandons threat to withhold Medicare and Medicaid funding over trans care
The Trump administration is abandoning its most aggressive attempt to end gender-affirming care for youth nationally, according to an official document obtained by NPR.
The document shows that the Department of Health and Human Services will not be finalizing a proposed rule that would have blocked all Medicaid and Medicare funding for hospitals that provide pediatric gender-affirming care.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services told NPR in a statement: "CMS does not comment on future rulemaking or speculate on potential actions. The Trump Administration rejects ideologically driven surgical interventions on vulnerable children." Read the full article here.

State lawmakers eye LGBTQ+ caucus in Albany
The state Legislature is poised to have the most out-LGBTQ+ members in its history at the start of the next year. Now, both current and likely incoming lawmakers are saying it's time the body formed an LGBTQ+ caucus to formally advocate for issues important to the community.

After last month's Democratic primary elections, the state Senate is set to have at least three out-LGBTQ+ members: state Sens. Jabari Brisport and Erik Bottcher, and likely incoming state Sen. Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas. The Assembly is set to have at least seven out members: Assembly Members Tony Simone, Diana Moreno and Harry Bronson, and likely incoming Assembly Members Brian Romero, David Orkin, Christian Celeste Tate and Illapa Saritupac. That number could go up to eight if David Siffert, who is nonbinary, wins their recount in a lower Manhattan race, set to take place Monday. Read the full article here.

Court issues major blow to DeSantis's "Stop WOKE Act" & calls it "a breathtaking assertion of power"
Florida's so-called Stop WOKE Act, championed by anti-LGBTQ+ Gov. Ron DeSantis (R), received a major blow on Tuesday, when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit upheld a 2022 injunction against applying the law to colleges and universities.

In the 2-1 decision, the judges called the law "a breathtaking assertion of power to ban unpopular ideas from public discourse in the very places the State's own statutes recognize as centers of inquiry – classrooms where students are trusted to puzzle through ideas that are good and bad, easy and hard, ideally getting ever closer to the truth."
The Stop WOKE Act censors protected speech on racism and gender-based discrimination in classrooms and workplaces with more than 15 employees. The law is so broadly and vaguely written that many have worried it discourages all lessons on diversity and societal prejudice. Read the full article here.

Dem governor signs parentage bill in big win for LGBTQ+ families: "Delaware has set an example"
Delaware Governor Matt Meyer (D) has signed a bill updating parentage laws around in vitro fertilization (IVF) and surrogacy to enhance protections for the family-building methods, which are key to many LGBTQ+ families. SB 250 comes at a time when both IVF access and LGBTQ+ rights are being threatened across the country.

"Today, we celebrate a victory for all children and families in Delaware," said Jordan Wilson, executive director of COLAGE, an organization designed to help support families with queer

parents or guardians. “By modernizing its laws to better reflect and protect today’s families, Delaware has set an example for states across the country.” Read the full article here.

Republicans scramble to find a replacement for Sen. Lindsey Graham ahead of the midterm elections

Republicans are starting to scramble to find both a temporary and a permanent replacement for Sen. Lindsey Graham, who in June won the GOP Senate primary in South Carolina and was expected to cruise to re-election to a fifth term in November. Hours after the senator’s death, President Donald Trump said Sunday that he had a preferred replacement in mind but declined to share a name out of respect for Graham. Per South Carolina state law, Gov. Henry McMaster, a Republican, must appoint someone to take over Graham’s post until early January.

The law also dictates the process for an election to permanently replace Graham. A special Republican primary election will be held Aug. 11, and candidates who wish to run can file to run for the seat beginning July 21. Read the full article here.

Medicaid funding restored for Planned Parenthood healthcare services

Planned Parenthood and two smaller regional abortion providers are resuming billing Medicaid for services other than abortion after being cut off for most of a year.

The defunding, which was mandated in Donald Trump’s big tax and spending legislation in July 2025, has been blamed for the closure of multiple clinics as well as a reduction in the number of Planned Parenthood patients being screened for breast cancer or tested for sexually transmitted infections.

The Medicaid billing was allowed to resume on Sunday July 5.

The restored funding does not mean the battle over federal abortion policy has ended – and not all services that were cut will return. Read the full article here.