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Date: June 30, 2020 BCD 2020-22

To: Ryan White Part B Service Providers

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Ryan White Part B and Life Care Services Emergency Financial Assistance Policy in Response to COVID-19: Funding Extension

Background

On March 12, 2020, Governor Evers proclaimed a public health emergency for the state of Wisconsin in response to COVID-19. The Wisconsin HIV Program made additional funding available to all subrecipients currently receiving Ryan White funds for the purposes of providing emergency financial assistance (EFA) to people living with HIV (PLWH) who were eligible for Ryan White services in Wisconsin for the duration of this public health emergency. Guidance for this funding was outlined in DPH Numbered Memo 2020-10: Ryan White Part B and Life Care Services Emergency Financial Assistance Policy in Response to COVID-19.

This guidance was re-evaluated after the public health emergency expired on May 11, 2020, and the Wisconsin HIV Program determined that emergency financial assistance can continue to be used for expanded purposes outlined in the guidance.

Definition

EFA provides limited assistance to a Ryan White Part B client with an urgent need for essential items or services necessary to improve health outcomes. The goal of EFA during the COVID-19 pandemic is to ensure people living with HIV retain access to essential items in a time of scarcity and thinning of the social safety net, and maintain best-practice social distancing, and to protect vulnerable populations from exposure to COVID-19. The allowable categories of EFA during the COVID-19 pandemic are:

- Housing
- Utilities
- Food
- Medication not covered by the Wisconsin AIDS Drug Assistance Program or another payer
- Personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies
- Child care during medical or HIV-related appointments

- Medical supplies such as thermometers, gloves, and face masks

Federal guidance states that EFA provides limited one-time or short-term payments to assist a client with urgent needs. Subrecipient agencies distributing EFA funds should limit EFA payments to one-time or short-term payments, generally defined as no more than two consecutive payments for any one EFA-allowable purpose. If questions arise about whether a client should receive EFA or another Ryan White-allowable service, such as housing or food assistance, please refer to Policy Clarification Notice (PCN) 16-02: Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds, or consult the Wisconsin HIV Program for clarification.

Requesting Funds

Subrecipient organizations that did not previously receive EFA funds in response to COVID-19, or have exhausted EFA funds received in response to COVID-19, can request additional EFA funds from the Wisconsin HIV Program using the processes below:

1. Subrecipient agencies that did not previously receive EFA funds in response to COVID-19: Please contact the Wisconsin HIV Program and inform them that you are requesting EFA funds for COVID-19 relief.
2. Subrecipient agencies that have exhausted EFA funds received in response to COVID-19: Please contact the Wisconsin HIV Program and provide the following information:
    a. Total number of clients who receive each category of EFA, where "category" means one of the seven cost categories described previously.
    b. Total amount expended for each category of EFA for the duration of the public health emergency.
    c. Methods used to provide EFA (e.g., payments to agencies, vouchers).
    d. A short justification, no more than one page, explaining the predicted use of EFA funds being requested and estimated number of clients to be served.

Additional Information

Please refer to DPH Numbered Memo 2020-10: Ryan White Part B and Life Care Services Emergency Financial Assistance Policy in Response to COVID-19 for detailed information regarding use of EFA funds and subrecipient expectations.

Sources: PCN 16-02, Housing Frequently Asked Questions for PCN-16-02, National Monitoring Standards, Ryan White Part B and Life Care Services Emergency Financial Assistance Policy in Response to COVID-19