



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

August 23, 2024

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West Miller Senate Office Bldg.  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Ben Barnes  
Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
121 House Office Bldg.  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: 2023 Joint Chairmen’s Report (p. 129-130) - Report on Home and Community-Based Options Waiver Care Plan Backlog - June 2024)**

Dear Chairs Guzzone and Barnes:

Pursuant to the requirements of the 2023 Joint Chairmen’s Report (p. 129-130), the Department of Health (Department) submits this report on the Community Options waiver care plan backlog. Specifically, the report addresses the impacts of this backlog on waiver applicants, participants and home and community-based services (HCBS) providers, such as delays in accessing HCBS and increased risk of hospitalization. The committees required the Department to submit monthly reports beginning July 1, 2023, on the progress in addressing the outstanding plan of service backlog. The report discusses current efforts underway and the great strides the Department is making to address the care plan backlog, including building internal and external resource capacity, and developing technological solutions to streamline processes that create cost-effective efficiencies.

In addition, the report details the following information in the aggregate and by county:

- the average number of days to approve a plan;
- the total number of pending plans at the beginning of each month;
- the number of new plans received in the prior month; and
- the number of plans approved by the end of the prior month.

**Background**

The Department’s Medicaid Office of Long Term Services and Supports (OLTSS) operates and/or oversees several HCBS programs. Of importance for this Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) is the Home and Community-Based Options Waiver (HCBO or “Community Options Waiver”), Community First Choice (CFC), Community Personal Assistance Services (CPAS), and Increased Community Services (ICS) programs. The four (4) aforementioned programs are impacted by the plan of service (POS) backlog reported during the 2023 legislative session.

**Plan of Service Metrics**

As requested by the committee, the average number of days to approve a plan, total number of pending plans at the beginning of each month, and the number of plans that received a decision within 30 days (one (1) month) are reported in Table 1 below for January 2023 through April 2024. The metrics reported are inclusive of initial, provisional, revised, and annual POS for applicants and participants in the HCBOW, CFC, CPAS, and ICS programs. OLTSS collaborated with the Hilltop Institute<sup>1</sup> to disaggregate the POS data by county as requested by the committees. As such, Table 2 below reflects the disaggregated care plan data by county.

**Table 1: Aggregated Care Plan Data**

<b>Month/Year</b>	<b>Average # of days to approve a plan</b>	<b>Total # of pending plans at the beginning of the month</b>	<b># of plans receiving a decision in less than 30 days</b>
January 2023	122	12,567	445
February 2023	144	12,886	347
March 2023	187	12,914	390
April 2023	137	13,394	265
May 2023	149	13,868	339
June 2023	148	14,347	257
July 2023	130	14,730	204
August 2023	148	14,925	215
September 2023	149	14,932	234
October 2023	138	14,982	308
November 2023	196	14,091	240
December 2023	119	13,799	175
January 2024	168	14,296	298
February 2024	155	14,573	306
March 2024	153	15,141	264
April 2024	173	15,555	229

<sup>1</sup> The Hilltop Institute is a nonpartisan research organization at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The Hilltop Institute collaborates with the Department to conduct objective, evidence-based research and analysis to inform state health policy.

**Table 2: April 2024 Care Plan Data by County**

<b>County</b>	<b>Average # of days to approve a plan</b>	<b>Total # of pending plans at the beginning of the month</b>	<b># of plans receiving a decision in less than 30 days</b>
Allegany	106	184	9
Anne Arundel	162	765	13
Baltimore	227	2,670	31
Baltimore City	131	2,903	43
Calvert	33	131	1
Caroline	266	101	2
Carroll	100	218	4
Cecil	217	225	2
Charles	192	328	8
Dorchester	63	125	1
Frederick	154	356	7
Garrett	158	142	3
Harford	164	484	8
Howard	157	956	16
Kent	52	54	0
Montgomery	183	2,942	45
Prince George's	209	101	22
Queen Anne's	781	1,704	0
Somerset	133	46	0
St. Mary's	179	127	1

Talbot	225	145	0
Washington	59	69	7
Wicomico	117	279	6
Worcester	134	328	0
Other <sup>2</sup>	0	172	0

### Remediation Strategies

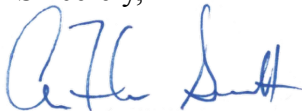
As previously reported in earlier iterations of this report, various initiatives have been implemented to resolve the POS backlog including auto-approval process for annual plans meeting specified criteria, the elimination of the waitlist for the assignment of a supports planner, and the development of a strategy to identify time-sensitive waiver applications and prioritize plans of service.

The full transition of care plan determinations to the Department’s Utilization Control Agent (UCA), Telligen, is actively underway. Currently, Telligen has seven (7) fully-trained plan reviewers, and Telligen is actively recruiting a second cohort of reviewers bringing the total number of clinical and non-clinical reviewers to 15. To expedite the resolution of the care plan backlog, the Department and Telligen are concurrently rendering plan determinations for both the backlog and new care plans. The backlog is expected to be resolved in the first quarter of 2025.

The Department currently has six (6) non-clinical reviewers and five (5) clinical reviewers to render care plan determinations. OLTSS continues active recruitment for vacant positions through multiple social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Handshake) and various stakeholder networks. Currently, there are 18 contractual positions and 4 merit positions vacant, totaling 22 vacant positions (4 Social Workers, 11 Health Policy Analysts, 5 Medical Care Program Specialists, 1 Administrator, and 1 Administrative Officer).

If you have any comments or questions about this subject, please contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs, at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

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<sup>2</sup> “Other” represents zip codes outside of Maryland. Upon review of the plan of service, OLTSS staff will determine if the client meets the technical criteria (e.g.; Maryland residency) before rendering a decision. If these individuals do not live in the state of Maryland, they will not meet technical eligibility and, therefore, their plan will be denied.

Cc: Marie Grant, JD, Assistant Secretary for Health Policy  
Ryan Moran, DrPH, Deputy Secretary, Health Care Financing and Medicaid  
Sarah Case-Herron, JD, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs  
Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)