

Medicaid No Longer Accepting Fast-Tracked Waivers Approvals

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The Trump administration announced it will no longer allow expedited extensions of state Medicaid pilot programs.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released a bulletin Tuesday informing states that it will **rescind** a previous agency policy that allowed a fast-tracked renewal of long-standing Medicaid pilot programs, known as Section 1115 waivers. The agency says the policy change will allow the CMS enough time to ensure that these programs comply with federal budget neutrality requirements.

Section 1115 waivers are used to fund several services not traditionally covered by Medicaid, such as housing and food assistance, as long as Medicaid costs for the initiatives don't exceed what the state would have spent without the waiver. The waivers have faced **criticism** from some conservative groups who say they can inflate federal spending.

The guidance builds on a letter sent by the CMS to states in **June**, which informed them that the agency will take additional steps to vet the actuarial soundness of their pilot programs. Waivers previously approved will undergo more thorough reviews by the agency to ensure costs remain in check.

The CMS expects this review process to delay approvals of pending and existing waivers.