



## ALLOW SERVICE MEMBERS TO RETAIN THEIR EARNED PRIORITY FOR RECEIVING MEDICAID HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES WAIVERS

*States can alleviate barriers experienced by military families who lose access to valuable medical benefits as a result of transitioning out of the Service.*

**KEY MESSAGE:** Independent state Medicaid eligibility requirements, and lengthy waiting lists, hinder military families from obtaining supplemental financial support for members with special needs during critical transition periods. States can assist military families by facilitating their ability to earn the same priorities afforded to every state resident.



**DISCUSSION POINTS:** States can assist separating Service members and their families by recognizing that the mobile military lifestyle hinders reasonable participation in state Medicaid options and waiver programs.

- States could allow active duty Service members to use their state of legal residence (i.e. where they pay taxes, vote, register their vehicles, hold a driver's license, etc.) to register their special needs family members for a Medicaid waiver.
  - Enrollment for waivers in their resident state would allow the family members to progress along with other state citizens until they become eligible to receive benefits.
  - Eligibility status is retained as long as the member maintains the state as his/her legal resident and returns to the state after military separation.<sup>1</sup> The member either receives credit for time on the list or begins receiving benefits when they return home.
- As an alternative, states may be able to consider modifying one of their existing waiver categories (such as individuals with critical need), to include military families transitioning out of the military in order to expedite services through Home and Community Based Services.<sup>2</sup>

The Department of Defense established the TRICARE ECHO program to provide \$36,000 of additional coverage for active duty sponsored family members with condition-specific needs; however, they lose ECHO support upon separation/retirement from the military. Additionally, when military families transition out of the military, they generally have to start the entire Medicaid application process again in the state in which they settle, resulting in long waiting periods without services. Consequently, families incur significant debt while paying for a family member's care.

<sup>1</sup> Joint Federal Travel Regulation paragraph Ch5 Part A-U5012-I extends the final travel benefits up to six years from effective date of separation.

<sup>2</sup> As an additional consideration, this option may also be able to facilitate expediting services to family members with special needs during an assignment while on active duty.