



FEB - 6 2019

Administrator
Washington, DC 20201

Penny Thompson
Chair
Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission
1800 M Street, NW, Suite 650 South
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Thompson:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Azar expressing your concerns with the Arkansas Works section 1115 Medicaid demonstration program. As well, thank you for outlining actions that the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) suggests the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) take after reviewing the early results coming out of the community engagement program established in the demonstration. The Secretary asked that I respond on his behalf.

CMS is monitoring the impact of the community engagement requirement in Arkansas and still is evaluating the early data and information from Arkansas. We have set high expectations for an independent evaluation, as MACPAC noted in its letter, and we are continuing to work with the state on its evaluation design so that we can work with the state to make changes where warranted.

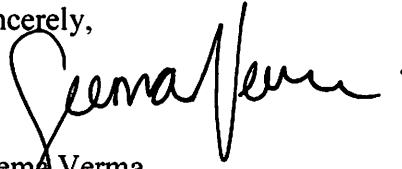
In discussions with the state, Arkansas has informed us that it believes that recommendations in your letter may have been based in part on errors and potentially misleading information. For example, MACPAC suggests that Arkansas is not adequately educating beneficiaries about the work and community engagement requirement. We understand the state is collaborating with the qualified health plans in educating beneficiaries about the requirements. Arkansas has conducted numerous online and print outreach and education efforts and, its qualified health plans are coordinating door-to-door visits, focus groups, print, and online outreach and education. The state has also reported to CMS that it is conducting a survey of individuals whose coverage has been terminated for failure to report compliance with community engagement, in order to determine the reasons for their failure to report and to better tailor their education and outreach efforts in the future. To the extent you have not already done so, we suggest that MACPAC provide the state with the opportunity to present its views on its findings, consistent with 42 U.S.C. § 1396(b)(12)).

With respect to the concerns your letter expressed about Arkansas requiring that community engagement information be reported online, we note that as of December 19, 2018, the state will supplement its current "registered reporter" telephone reporting option with a helpline that will permit beneficiaries to report this information directly to the state by telephone.

CMS is committed to continuing to support states' choices, with appropriate beneficiary safeguards, to implement demonstrations that include community engagement requirements. CMS believes such opportunities put beneficiaries in control to live healthier and more independent lives. With regard to the Arkansas Works 1115 demonstration, in light of our ongoing evaluation of the state's implementation of Arkansas Works, we will not at this time be instructing the state to pause disenrollments. The work will continue as approved under the current demonstration.

If you have additional questions, please contact Christopher Traylor, Acting Deputy Administrator and Director of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services at Christopher.Traylor@cms.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seema Verma". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and a long, sweeping tail.

Seema Verma