ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DHS Secretary Janet Mann
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Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
Dr. Mehmet Oz, MD, Administrator
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Oz,

We appreciate the ongoing support and guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as we navigate the future of our Medicaid expansion program.

We know from our continuing dialogues with your teams that the pending renewal waiver for our existing Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me, or ARHOME, program will not be approved due to the subsequent passage of H.R. 1 and the added budget neutrality rules. ARHOME currently serves more than 200,000 Arkansans, and we intend to work with a wide range of partners to develop an innovative solution that positions the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) as both good caretakers of the eligible individuals who rely on our services and good stewards of the taxpayer dollars that finance our critical mission.

As we work with those stakeholders to craft our solution, I am writing to you today to formally request a two-year extension of the current ARHOME waiver to provide sufficient time to wind down the existing program while simultaneously designing and implementing a new Medicaid delivery system for beneficiaries. The current ARHOME waiver expires at the end of this year and transitioning away from this program will necessitate a great amount of time and resources. During this transition period, beneficiaries will continue to receive coverage regardless of the extension decision through existing statutory authorization.

DHS is will on its way to fully launching the community engagement and work requirement for the ARHOME population, while will go into effect on January 1, 2027. Helping capable individuals transition off the sidelines so we can focus resources on those truly in need remains a top priority. Shifting to a new program on the same day we initiate the new work requirement policy could distract from those efforts.

We believe this two-year extension is a prudent step that will allow us to successfully work alongside our partners in the Legislature and would ask for your favorable consideration. I am happy to provide additional details or answer questions, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Janet Mann

Janet Mann, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Human Services

Cc: Caprice Knapp
Sarah Aker