

Partnering with States Under the “Expanding Access to Women’s Health Grant Program”

Public Consulting Group (PCG) is committed to delivering solutions to support state efforts to advance equitable healthcare coverage and outcomes.

Who We Are

Public Consulting Group (PCG) has over 37 years of experience helping health and human service agencies develop policy, draft regulations, accelerate improvements and policy adoption in the delivery system, engage diverse stakeholders, and analyze all aspects of coverage adequacy and expansion. Our team of subject matter experts is ready to support states that recently received grant funding to expand access to women’s health services.

The Opportunity

State recipients of the “Expanding Access to Women’s Health Grant Program” have 24 months to enact their strategies to:

- Develop campaigns to educate women and birthing people about coverage options and available reproductive health and family planning services.
- Expand access to reproductive health and family planning services.
- Assess and update current Essential Health Benefits benchmark plans to include a broader scope of benefits coverage for reproductive and maternal health services.
- Assess the cost of broadening coverage of reproductive healthcare services.

PCG regularly partners with state Departments of Insurance to support these types of activities. We pair that deep insurance experience with a team of subject matter experts in women’s health.

**Develop educational campaigns about coverage options and available services
Launching Outreach and Educational Campaigns to Improve Utilization**



States have the opportunity to use funding to support the development of educational materials and outreach through a range of methods including social media and mass media campaigns, dedicated webpages, tabling at community-based events and locations, and in-person and virtual information sessions. Providers and other community-based partners can also be leveraged through a train-the-trainer approach.

Take Note: Many states engaged in broad health insurance-focused outreach and education campaigns to help residents learn about their state’s Health Insurance Exchange and the coverage available to them and how to enroll in coverage. Those campaigns – and proven best practices from them, including the use of social media campaigns, partnering with on-the-ground trusted organizations, and meeting people “where they are” in the community - can provide roadmaps to more targeted campaigns related to access to women’s healthcare.

Contact Us

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Contact Meghan Cox (mecox@pcgus.com, 518-573-2965) at PCG if we can help you improve access to women’s health services in your state!



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Expand Access to Reproductive Health and Family Planning Services Enhancing Plan Reviews and Standard Processes



The funding can also be leveraged for strategies to identify gaps in coverage and provider networks, such as strengthening forms reviews; enhancing reviews of provider networks with a focus on key providers such as midwives, doulas, and community health workers; and supporting market conduct examinations. States might also consider how to integrate appropriate access to telehealth services as an opportunity to expand access. States can also implement standard forms and/or administrative processes; automate data collection, review, and analysis; and leverage All-Payer Claims databases to support those reviews.

Take Note: States conducting plan management functions as part of the Qualified Health Plan (QHP) certification review process can develop their own plan certification templates and tools for review of federal or state QHP standards – even states with Federally-facilitated Exchanges (FfEs). And, of course, all states have the opportunity to integrate additional reviews into their state-based plan review and market conduct examinations. Similarly, the use of standardized forms or processes is not new, with many states already having such requirements related to prior authorizations.

Assess and Update Current Essential Health Benefits (EHB) Benchmark Plans Reviewing and Revising Essential Health Benefits and Standardized Plans



States can use grant funding to support actuarial and other analyses of the states’ current EHB benchmark plan coverage of reproductive, maternal, and other women’s health services, and opportunities to update it under the existing benchmark plan designation process. State-based Exchange states with or considering standardized plans can use this opportunity to explore implementing or updating such plans to ensure access to key health services – both in-person and via telehealth.

Take Note: States have broad flexibility to select an EHB benchmark plan to define coverage requirements that apply to plans in the state. States must notify CMS when it selects a new benchmark plan two years prior to the effective date (by the first Wednesday in May). Prior to doing so, states must provide “reasonable public notice” and opportunity for public comment on the plan selection. States with State-based Exchanges also have the ability to create state-specific standardized plans that carriers must offer on the Exchange.

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**Assess the Cost of Broadening Coverage of Reproductive Healthcare Services
Pairing Policy and Actuarial Reviews with Processes to Gather On-the-Ground Input
about Existing Coverage**



Another strategy that can be supported is policy and actuarial reviews of the opportunities, costs, and impacts of broadening coverage requirements. This can include in-state landscape analyses as well as looking to leading practice and similar states for innovation opportunities and cost data. Rate studies and actuarial analyses will be critical to informing these studies. States should consider gathering additional qualitative and quantitative data through community-based collaboratives and focus groups, surveys, and informational interviews with patients and providers, and partnering with local organizations to identify challenges, gaps, and needs. Departments of Insurance can also leverage consumer inquiry, complaint, and external review data to assess patterns of denials or access concerns.

Take Note: Stakeholder input can provide grounded information about unintended barriers to inform state policy and process decisions. These can and should take a variety of forms from online surveys to in-person forums, focus groups and/or interviews to public stakeholder input sessions. In fact, states are finding that, through the use of skilled facilitators and proven facilitation methods, targeted stakeholder engagements can be used for a range of purposes, including to generate information, educate consumers and providers, and generate community-informed policy priorities.

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