



HEALTHCARE

HOW STATE MEDICAID AGENCIES CAN PREPARE FOR ADMINISTRATION CHANGES

Preparation is key to support a smooth transition from one state government administration to the next. During the 2018 midterm elections, 20 states elected new governors, eight of which represented a change in political party. We asked former state agency staff and our Navigant Medicaid experts to share some best practices and lessons learned on what state Medicaid agencies can do to prepare for a transition.

STEPS FOR STATE MEDICAID AGENCIES TO CONSIDER

It's likely that state Medicaid leadership has already started the planning process and met with the incoming administration's transition teams. State Medicaid agencies can take these steps to help the incoming administration get up to speed:

- **Summarize key initiatives and decisions:** Develop an executive briefing that provides a description of each Medicaid initiative. Include key risks, financial impact, timelines, and the relative importance of each initiative. Be sure to prioritize initiatives based on their present or future impact. Give the new administration a full understanding of all hot-button issues within the department, such as adverse federal actions and pending decisions or crises that the department might be facing, including budgetary issues. This document will support the transition team to further understand where Medicaid is headed and whether initiatives need to be realigned to better fit the incoming administration's goals and objectives.
- **Develop options analyses regarding key initiatives:** To support decision-making, the agency should provide options analyses regarding key initiatives. This will also be an opportunity for the agency to recommend a specific course of action, as the new administration might not have the same depth of knowledge on certain issues. The agency should also develop a timeline of key decisions needed by the new administration to stay on track with existing initiatives or, if existing initiatives are discontinued, a communication timeline for when key stakeholders (e.g., regulatory agencies, participants, and providers) will be notified.
- **Identify key risk areas:** In addition to continuing key initiatives, new administrations will need to be made aware of areas that could pose a risk to the continued success of the Medicaid program. Transition periods may represent an opportunity for agencies to not only inform new administrations of these risks, but also to request the resources to mitigate them.

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About Navigant

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- **Prepare a key stakeholder list:** The agency should identify key stakeholders to help the new administration determine who needs to be at the table for key decisions or for insights regarding proposed Medicaid program changes. Furthermore, the agency should update its communication strategy for any changes made to existing policies and initiatives. Key stakeholders typically include both internal and external players:
 - *External stakeholders:* Providers, advocates, associations, vendors, legislators, consumers, and media.
 - *Internal stakeholders:* Agency leadership and employees across Medicaid and sister agencies.
- **Update budget projections:** To support the governor's budget proposal, which is developed shortly after taking office, the agency should proactively refine its financial projections, budget development timelines, processes, and deliverables.
- **Develop educational materials:** The agency should be prepared to educate the new administration, and tailor materials to the new administration's experience with Medicaid. We have worked in states where the new administration had limited Medicaid knowledge and required primers on Medicaid basics. In other states, the new administration brought in Medicaid experts and required education on the specific issues affecting the state's current Medicaid program. Each agency department lead should also prepare a document that outlines its primary role and responsibility, successes, key initiatives for which the department leads are responsible, and key risks and challenges facing the department. This information will better support leadership decision-making and future planning activities.

SUPPORTING STATE MEDICAID AGENCIES THROUGH TRANSITION

Navigant has a multidisciplinary team of experts offering extensive and practical experience managing Medicaid and other healthcare and social services programs. Many of our leading experts are former senior Medicaid officials who have direct experience in undergoing administration changes. Our team has significant experience providing support to both existing Medicaid staff and new leadership as they prepare to realign healthcare policies and initiatives to a new administration, including:

- **Transition preparation:** We work with state Medicaid agencies and prepare materials that agencies use to update new leadership on current initiatives, risk areas, and challenges. These materials typically include a summary of key initiatives, a key stakeholder listing, options analyses for decision-making, updates to budgeting materials, and educational resources.
- **Operational effectiveness:** We perform operational assessments of state Medicaid agency programs and operations to identify areas for improvement and compliance gaps or risks. Assessments help leadership evaluate financial, operational, and structural changes necessary to achieve program goals. We typically report our findings to the Medicaid agency's senior leadership team or to executive and legislative branches. Navigant not only objectively evaluates programs and provides recommendations for improvement, but we also have the tools and resources to assist states with implementing those recommendations.
- **Strategic planning:** We support states with strategic planning to identify new healthcare transformation initiatives that include efficient, cost-effective delivery of medically necessary services. As state and administration priorities change, we work with states to design, implement, operate, and evaluate Medicaid programs.