

Report in Brief

Date: August 2024

Report No. A-06-22-02000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Why OIG Did This Audit

Prior OIG audits of New Mexico's Medicaid personal care services (PCS) program found that New Mexico did not always ensure that PCS were provided by individuals qualified in accordance with Federal and State requirements.

The objective of this audit was to determine whether New Mexico ensured that PCS were provided by qualified attendants under Federal and State requirements.

How OIG Did This Audit

Our audit covered 2.7 million paid Medicaid PCS encounter claims (claims) and the qualifications of the attendants who provided those services during CY 2019 (audit period). We reviewed a stratified random sample of 300 claims to determine whether the associated services were provided by attendants whose qualifications complied with Federal and State requirements.

New Mexico Did Not Ensure Attendants Were Qualified To Provide Personal Care Services, Putting Medicaid Enrollees at Risk

What OIG Found

New Mexico did not ensure that PCS were provided by qualified attendants in accordance with Federal and State requirements. For 106 of the 300 sampled claims, the associated attendants met qualification requirements. However, for the remaining 194 claims, the associated attendants did not meet 1 or more requirements related to criminal background checks, abuse registry checks, tuberculosis testing, written competency tests, annual training, and CPR and first aid certifications.

On the basis of our sample results, we estimate that 69 percent of attendants associated with PCS claims during our audit period did not meet qualification requirements.

What OIG Recommends and New Mexico Comments

We made a series of recommendations to New Mexico, including that it work with Medicaid managed care organizations to develop procedures to monitor PCS providers' compliance with attendant qualification requirements and to educate providers about these requirements. The full recommendations are in the report.

In written comments on our draft report, New Mexico concurred with all of our recommendations and described corrective actions it had taken or planned to take. New Mexico said that it has amended its contracts with the Medicaid managed care organizations to require them to perform annual audits of all Agency Based Community Benefit (ABCB) providers and to develop corrective actions for programmatic deficiencies. New Mexico also said that it has recently revised the Medicaid Managed Care Policy Manual (the Manual) to outline the requirements of the PCS providers. New Mexico added that it will pursue an amendment to the Manual to require MCOs to conduct a semiannual webinar with contracted providers on PCS attendant qualifications. Finally, New Mexico will distribute an annual newsletter to providers and include a copy of this report in the first newsletter to demonstrate the significance of attendant qualifications.