

Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)

A Vital New Element in Medicaid Service design and oversight.

What are BACs?

The [Access Rule](#) introduced a requirement for Beneficiary Advisory Councils (BACs). These are newly established advisory groups in each state, composed of Medicaid recipients, their family members, and caregivers. These councils are created and managed by state Medicaid agencies. Members are either applicants or nominees selected by the state Medicaid agency. Importantly, BAC members, representing 25% of the Medicaid Advisory Committees, will have the unique role of advising states on crucial Medicaid matters in two capacities.

When Will They Happen?

One year after the Access Rule becomes effective, BACs must be established. This means that your state Medicaid agency may already be accepting applications and nominations for BAC members. Transparency is a key requirement, ensuring that recruitment and selection processes are clear and open.

How Will BACs Work?

BACs will convene quarterly, either virtually or in person, before the Medicaid Advisory Committee meetings. At least two of these meetings each year will be open to the public, but the BAC can meet more frequently and privately if needed. States are obligated to ensure meetings are convenient and accessible, with call-in options available.

All BAC activities will be public, including agendas, meeting times, notes, and membership lists. States will provide support staff to assist BACs in their work, including annual reports and facilitating public meetings with comment periods for community input.

Why Does It Matter?

The BACs offer a powerful platform for individuals with firsthand experience of Medicaid services to influence state-level decisions. This opportunity extends to potential appointments to the Medicaid Advisory Committee, amplifying their impact.

As BACs gain visibility through their published meetings and reports, their influence is likely to grow, ensuring that the voices of Medicaid recipients and their advocates are heard and respected.

What Should You Do?

- Stay informed about your state Medicaid agency's announcements regarding BAC member nominations.
- Contact your Statewide Independent Living Council or Developmental Disabilities Council for information on your state's plans.
- Consider nominating individuals you know who use Medicaid services, especially home and community-based services, and who are passionate about advocating for system improvements.

Join the BAC and be a part of shaping the future of Medicaid services in your state. Your voice matters!

CMS Access Rule federal register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/05/10/2024-08363/medicaid-program-ensuring-access-to-medicaid-services>