

Montana 1915(c) Big Sky Waiver (BSW) Amendment
Public Notice December 23, 2025

On or before March 1, 2026, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will submit an application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for approval to amend the 1915(c) Big Sky Waiver (BSW), requesting a proposed effective date of June 1, 2026.

The Senior and Long-Term Care (SLTC) Division's BSW is expanding its residential habilitation service continuum by introducing Category D Intensive Assisted Living services. These services, mandated by Montana Senate Bill (SB) 524, are designed to address a critical gap between traditional care offered in an Assisted Living Facility and inpatient psychiatric hospitalization by offering structured, community-based support for individuals with acute behavioral health and neurocognitive needs.

This amendment ensures that Montana continues to meet federal Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) requirements while addressing service gaps that lead to unnecessary institutionalization.

This waiver amendment incorporates the following changes:

- The addition of Category D Intensive Assisted Living Residential Habilitation Service
- A revision to BSW's incident management process

The following Appendices will be modified:

- Appendix B:
 - B-3:
 - Add Category D Intensive Assisted Living as Reserved Capacity
 - Add Purpose and Description regarding request for Reserved Capacity for Category D
 - Request 30 for reserved capacity
- Appendix C:
 - New service added: Category D Intensive Assisted Living
- Appendix G:
 - G-1
 - Critical Incident Reporting Requirements: The addition of Pulselight Aura and the implementation of the Serious Occurrence Committee
 - Review and Response to Critical Incidents: The addition of the Serious Occurrence Review Committee and the use of Pulselight Aura
 - G-2
 - Safeguards concerning the use of restraints and seclusions: The addition of the Serious Occurrence Committee is intended to act as a safeguard against unauthorized restraints and seclusions
 - G-3

- The addition of the Serious Occurrence Committee acts as a safeguard and addresses incidents related to medication errors
- Appendix H:
 - H-1
 - System Design Changes: Language added regarding the Serious Occurrence Committee and Pulselight Aura's impact on the incident management process and design changes
- Appendix I:
 - I-2
 - Rate Determination Method: Entire section revised to reflect the addition of a new service and the comprehensive provider rate study completed by Guidehouse
- Appendix J:
 - J-1
 - Composite Overview: changed to reflect Category D Intensive Assisted Living
 - J-2
 - Average Length of Stay: Language added to reflect Category D Intensive Assisted Living
 - Derivation of Estimates: Language added to Factor D Derivation
 - Component Management for Waiver Services: Category D Intensive Assisted Living added
 - Estimate of Factor D: Category D Intensive Assisted Living added for each Waiver Year

The current BSW fee schedule can be found at:

<https://medicaidprovider.mt.gov/docs/feeschedules/2025/ProposedJuly2025BigSkyWaiverFeeSchedule.pdf>

The draft BSW is available for review at:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/sltc/BigSkyWaiver/BSW-WaiverAmendment-251216.PDF>

The state will make hard copies of the waiver renewal available upon request.

DPHHS is committed to an extensive public process. We invite your comments and questions on the BSW amendment emailed or postmarked **through January 22, 2026**. You may direct comments to the Medicaid State Plan Amendment and Waiver Coordinator at (406) 444-2584 or dphhscomments@mt.gov or the Director's Office, PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210.