



CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
Office of the Secretary

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Eric C. Friedlander
Secretary

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Speaker David Osborne
Speaker Pro Tempore David Meade
702 Capitol Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Speaker and Speaker Pro Tempore:

Too many Kentucky citizens have limited access to food, health care, behavioral health care and other critical assistance. The current version of House Bill 7 would make it even harder for Kentuckians in need to get assistance for food and health care, hurting our families, seniors, children, and those with disabilities, in need of behavioral and substance use treatment. It will also hurt grocers and health care providers, and will increase regions of the Commonwealth that lack access to health care, food, child care and other assistance Kentuckians depend on.

Specifically, many parts of the bill will cut benefits to our lowest-income Kentucky families. This will further burden parents' and caregivers' ability to support their children and households. As you know, people who lose Medicaid coverage would more likely rely on expensive emergency department visits or delay seeking care - or not seek care at all. House Bill 7 also adds recertification requirements that would hamper Kentuckians seeking treatment for behavioral health and substance use needs, two areas already in crisis in Kentucky. The rate of uninsured Kentuckians could increase by 10 percent.

House Bill 7 also places deadlines on CHFS without providing any funds for additional resources and staff. With a limited staff that is already stretched to the limit for current SNAP and Medicaid eligibility decisions, CHFS will not be able to meet the unfunded mandates of House Bill 7. The workload increase would cause a backlog of cases in many areas, including child care, SNAP and Medicaid and cause major disruptions for individuals attempting to access services.

Additional Medicaid recertifications would impact the Cabinet in two waves. First, the end of the Federal COVID-19 public health emergency declaration would require CHFS to, within 60 days, reprocess about 180,000 applications. This is not possible. In addition, new recertification requirements could add at least another 100,000 calls per month. The new requirements for

applying and recertifying for SNAP will also significantly increase administrative workload. Simply put, House Bill 7 will overwhelm workers and systems.

There would also be a significant cost to Medicaid providers, and all health care providers would lose revenue because of increased unavailability of Medicaid reimbursements for individuals who do not have health care coverage.

For these and other reasons, CHFS opposes House Bill 7.

Sincerely



Secretary Eric Friedlander
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

cc: House Health and Family Services Committee Members

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Rep. Melinda Gibbons Prunty - Vice Chair
Rep. Danny Bentley
Rep. Adam Bowling
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