



ARIZONA

HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT SYSTEM

ALTCS HNT and ECR Rulemaking Updates

Friday, April 10, 2026 9:30-11:30 am
Tuesday, April 14, 2026 6:00-8:00 pm

Welcome and Overview



Jakenna Lebsock,
Deputy Assistant Director,
Division of Managed Care -
ALTCS

AGENDA

- Overview
- Rulemaking Process
- Next Steps
- Timeline
- How to Engage



Click the Interpretation button at the bottom of your Zoom screen and then select either English or Spanish to hear the meeting.
Presione el botón de interpretación en la parte inferior de su pantalla Zoom y después seleccione inglés o español para escuchar la reunion.



Overview

Background (How we got here)

- AHCCCS rolled out a new Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Needs Tool (HNT), effective October 1, 2025.
 - Use of this tool was paused in mid-October 2025.
 - AHCCCS initiated an Emergency Rule on October 15, 2025, that allowed the agency to revise policies and develop an Extraordinary Care Review (ECR) process.
 - MCOs (including DDD) went back to using old assessment tools while AHCCCS revised policies.
- AHCCCS held a series of forums in October and November 2025.
- AHCCCS released draft policies for public comment in November 2025.

What Is Happening?

- AHCCCS is working to implement rulemaking, based off the Emergency Rule from last October. This allows AHCCCS to continue its policy making efforts and grants the agency authority to have the ECR process.
- AHCCCS will extend the Emergency Rule as well as pursue regular rulemaking to allow for efforts to continue.
 - Information can be found at: <https://www.azahcccs.gov/PlansProviders/CurrentProviders/State/proposedrules.html>
- This allows AHCCCS to:
 - Revise the HNT, including the assessment categories and age limits
 - Establish an exception process (AHCCCS calls this the extraordinary care review)

Member Experience Right Now

- Status quo until Rule and policies are finalized and implemented
 - Ongoing quarterly meetings between members/families and case managers or support coordinators
 - No change to assessment tool or service planning process currently; this will change once the policies are finished/implemented
- Families should be thinking about plans if their child's service hours are changed through the new assessment process
 - Families have several months to work on ideas
 - It is expected the Rule will be finalized in August 2026 and the HNT and ECR policies will be effective in Fall 2026; more details will be shared as they are available.

What Does This Mean?

- A Rule is a requirement placed on a state agency and gives them authority to do things a certain way.
- The Rule gives direction to AHCCCS, who then has to make sure policies are developed to follow the Rule.
- AHCCCS must follow (comply with) the Rule and make sure the health plans (including DDD) also follow the Rule requirements.
 - AHCCCS does this through policies:
 - [AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual](#) (e.g. the HNT policy, AMPM 1620-17)
 - [AHCCCS Contractor Operations Manual](#) (e.g. the ECR policy, ACOM 450)

Why Does This Matter?

- The Governor's Office and AHCCCS heard there were a lot of concerns about some of the new policies that were implemented on October 1, 2025.
- Governor Hobbs directed AHCCCS to pause the policies, specifically the HNT for children under 18, to create an exception process and revise the tool to make any appropriate updates.
 - This provided some relief to members, families, advocates and providers who were concerned about the policies and the impact they may have on AHCCCS members.
 - This also provides the agency and the community an opportunity to rework the policies.

What Has AHCCCS Done So Far?

- Under the Emergency Rule, AHCCCS drafted a new ECR policy and revised the HNT policy.
 - These policies went out for public comment in November 2025.
- AHCCCS has reviewed all the public comments received and is working on updating the policies -
 - This will continue through the rulemaking process, with AHCCCS also incorporating public feedback received during the Regular Rule public comment period and Rule hearings.

The Arizona State Seal is a circular emblem on the left side of the slide. It features a central shield with a cactus, a sun, and a mountain. The shield is surrounded by a wreath of olive and oak branches. The outer ring of the seal contains the text 'THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA' and '1909'.

Rulemaking

What Happens with An Emergency Rule?

- The Emergency Rule renewal will be valid for another 180 days (until October 10, 2026).
- The Emergency Rule allows AHCCCS to pursue Regular Rulemaking during this time.
 - A Regular Rule is a permanent rule in the Arizona Administrative Code. Regular Rules are not time limited but are reviewed every five years to make sure they are still needed.
 - This means that AHCCCS will have to look at the Emergency Rule, figure out any needed changes, and then go through the Rulemaking process.

What Happens with A Regular Rule?

- Regular Rulemaking has several steps:
 - Informal feedback,
 - An economic impact study,
 - A formal public comment period,
 - A hearing at AHCCCS,
 - a presentation (study session) and hearing with the Governor's Regulatory Review Council, and
 - Approval by the Secretary of State.



What do I Need to Know About Regular Rulemaking?

- Rules are mainly for agency purposes – but they are important to be aware of as they can impact how health plans (including DDD) provide services to members.
- AHCCCS is working on the Regular Rulemaking; it is expected to post to the Secretary of State's Register soon.
- AHCCCS will seek feedback on the Rule in several ways:
 - Formal 30-day public comment period
 - Public Hearing
 - Through the Governor's Regulatory Review Council (GRRC) Study Session and Hearing

DRAFT Rule Language

- The Regular Rule has two major areas of focus:
 - The HCBS Needs Tool services/tasks and related age limitations, and
 - The Extraordinary Care Review process.
- Rule language is concise and technical in nature.
 - Provides the overall structure/high-level requirements that AHCCCS must follow
 - Policies will be more detailed and provide additional clarity on how the Rule will be implemented and adhered to

DRAFT Rule Language: HNT

HNT Area	10/15/25 Emergency Rule Language/Age	Proposed Regular Rule Language/Age
Housekeeping/Cleaning	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 18	No change from Emergency Rule
Laundry	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 18	No change from Emergency Rule
Incontinence-Based Laundry	Not included in the emergency rule	Added as a new task; shall not be assessed under the age of 4
Food Shopping	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 18	No change from Emergency Rule
Medication Pick Up	No age limitation	No change from Emergency Rule
Meal Prep/Clean Up	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 12	No change from the Emergency Rule
Specialty Meal Prep/Clean Up	No age limitation	No change from Emergency Rule
Eating/Feeding	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 8	Changed to: Shall not be assessed under the age of 5

Click the Interpretation button at the bottom of your Zoom screen and then select either English or Spanish to hear the meeting.
 Presione el botón de interpretación en la parte inferior de su pantalla Zoom y después seleccione inglés o español para escuchar la reunion.



DRAFT Rule Language: HNT

HNT Area	10/15/25 Emergency Rule Language/Age	Proposed Regular Rule Language/Age
Specialty Eating/Feeding	No age limitation	No change from Emergency Rule
Bathing	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 8	Changed to: Shall not be assessed under the age of 5
Dressing	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 7	Changed to: Shall not be assessed under the age of 5
Grooming	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 8	Changed to: Shall not be assessed under the age of 5
Toileting	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 4	No change from Emergency Rule
Specialty Toileting	No age limitation	No change from Emergency Rule
Mobility	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 4	Changed to: Shall not be assessed under the age of 2
Transferring	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 4	Changed to: Shall not be assessed under the age of 2

Click the Interpretation button at the bottom of your Zoom screen and then select either English or Spanish to hear the meeting.
Presione el botón de interpretación en la parte inferior de su pantalla Zoom y después seleccione inglés o español para escuchar la reunión.



DRAFT Rule Language: HNT

HNT Area	10/15/25 Emergency Rule Language/Age	Proposed Regular Rule Language/Age
Attendant Care Supervision	Shall not be assessed for children under the age of 10	No change from Emergency Rule
Specialty Supervision	Not included in the emergency rule	Added as a new task; no age limitations
Habilitation	0-2: Do not assess 3-5: Not to exceed 5 hours in a 7-day period 6-9: Not to exceed 9 hours in a 7-day period 10-12: Not exceed 11 hours in a 7-day period 13-17: Not to exceed 14 hours in a 7-day period	Changed to: 0-2: do not assess 3+: no more that 14 hours/7-day period

DRAFT Rule Language: ECR

- No major changes from the 10/15/25 Emergency Rule language
 - Will make some technical clarifications/working changes (e.g. changing the word "prior" to "previous")
 - Will add the following requirement for better clarity:
 - "Adhere to federal timelines regarding decision making and notification of the outcome to members/families."

Next Steps



What Happens After This?

- For awareness, AHCCCS hosted another information forum just like this one, on Friday, April 10, 2026.
- The slide deck and a forum recording will be posted to the [AHCCCS website](#), under ALTCS Policy Updates.
- The Emergency Rule will be renewed and be in place for up to 180 days.
- The Regular Rule will be posted for review and public comment; this will be available for 30 days, once the Rule is documented in the Secretary of State's Register.
 - Information can be found at:
<https://www.azahcccs.gov/PlansProviders/CurrentProviders/State/proposedrules.html>
- AHCCCS will continue to engage with the community; we will share opportunities as they come available.



Timelines

Timelines

- April 2026 – Obtain Emergency Rule Renewal
- April 2026 – File Regular Rule with the Secretary of State
- April – May 2026 – AHCCCS will hold a 30-day public comment period on the Regular Rule
 - Anticipated to start on Friday, April 17, 2026
- May 19, 2026 – AHCCCS will host a public hearing on the Rule
- May-June – AHCCCS will review all public comments and make adjustments to Rule language if necessary

Timelines

- July-August – AHCCCS will work with GRRC to review the Rule and present for a formal decision regarding the Rule
- After GRRC approves the Rule, AHCCCS will finalize policies and post to the AHCCCS website as soon as possible
- In the following weeks, Health Plans (including DDD) will work on readiness to implement the new policies
- Fall 2026 or sooner - New HNT and ECR policies will "go live" based on DDD and EPD Health Plan readiness

How To Engage



How to Engage

- Public Forums
- Visit our website and explore our pages dedicated to these Rules and the HNT/ECR policies:
 - Information can be found at:
<https://www.azahcccs.gov/Members/AlreadyCovered/MemberResources/> and
<https://www.azahcccs.gov/Members/GetCovered/Categories/ALTCS.html>
- Email Us: ALTCS@azahcccs.gov
 - With questions/concerns
- Review the Rule and provide Public Comment
- Join us at one of the public Rule Hearings and share your feedback



ALTCS Policy FAQs

- AHCCCS has posted FAQs about the pause and policy updates.
 - These will be updated regularly.
- You can find the FAQs at:
 - www.azahcccs.gov/Members/GetCovered/Categories/ALTCS.html

ALTCS: Coverage for Individuals with Long-Term Care Needs

The Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS, pronounced ALL-Tecs) is health insurance for individuals who have an age related, and/or physical, and/or intellectual/developmental disability, and who require nursing facility level of care. Services may be provided in an institution or in a home or community-based setting.

Eligibility & How to Apply

Assessing Care Needs for ALTCS Members



Click the Interpretation button at the bottom of your Zoom screen and then select either English or Spanish to hear the meeting.
Presione el botón de interpretación en la parte inferior de su pantalla Zoom y después seleccione inglés o español para escuchar la reunion.





Review of Chat Messages

ABA Policy Updates

While not related to the HNT and ECR work, AHCCCS is sharing the following for awareness:

- AHCCCS will be posting the revised Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) policy for public comment in the near future.
- AHCCCS will be hosting public forums related to ABA:
 - Provider-Focused Forum
 - Wednesday, April 15 – 11:00 AM-12:00 PM
Register: ahcccs.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YnjBEyPZT72XbThUfM9ppQ
 - Member/Family-Focused Forum
 - Thursday, April 16 – 6:00-7:00 PM
Register: ahcccs.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nhuPvaEfSBqSzN9mJ6Y8mg
 - American Sign Language (ASL), Closed Captioning, and Spanish interpretation will be available for both sessions.

Follow & Support AHCCCS on Social Media

facebook

[@AHCCCSgov](https://www.facebook.com/AHCCCSgov)



[@AHCCCSgov](https://twitter.com/AHCCCSgov)



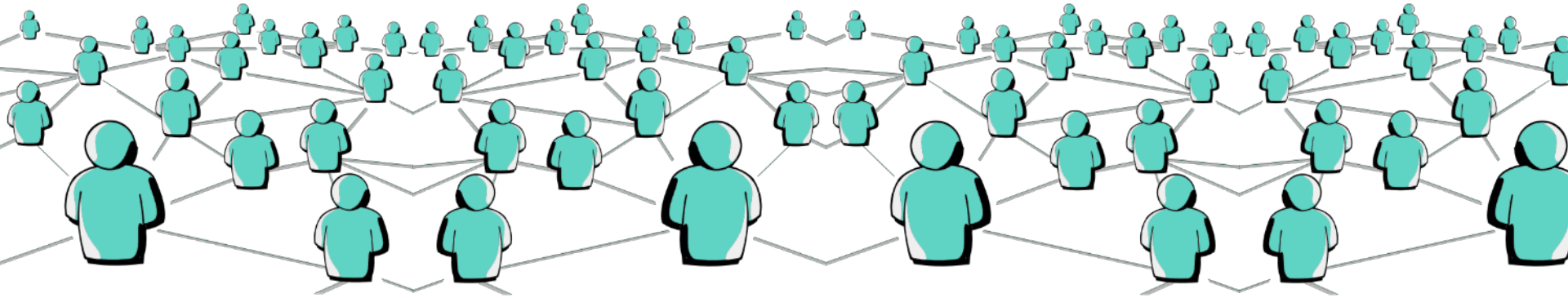
[@AHCCCSGov](https://www.instagram.com/AHCCCSGov)



[@AHCCCS](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AHCCCS)



[AHCCCSgov](https://www.youtube.com/AHCCCSgov)



Learn about AHCCCS' Medicaid Program on YouTube!

AHCCCS
Explains...

Medicaid Eligibility

AHCCCS
Explains...

ALTCS

AHCCCS
Explains...

Health-e-Arizona Plus



Other Resources - Quick Links

- [About AHCCCS](#)
- [Acronyms](#)
- [State Medicaid Advisory Committee \(SMAC\)](#)
- [Communicating the BAC and MAC](#)
- [Beneficiary Advisory Council \(BAC\)](#)
- [Tribal Relations](#)





Thank You