

INTERNAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS
“Medicaid Analyses with Short Turnaround” (MAST)
DUE DATE: 8:00 AM MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2018
Anticipated funding period: December 15, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Summary

The North Carolina Division of Health Benefits (“NC Medicaid”) has committed up to \$400,000 over the 2018-2019 State Fiscal Year to fund short-term analysis informing Medicaid program administration. It anticipates funding five research projects (approximately \$68,000 each), with the aim of leveraging existing partnerships with The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research and the School of Social Work to researchers from across the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to produce *high-quality, data-driven, timely, actionable analysis and policy recommendations* that support the work of NC Medicaid. Projects should be quick turnaround policy-relevant research designed to be completed by June 30, 2019.

Potential investigators are invited to submit applications (see below for format) for individual projects that correspond to Medicaid’s priority areas, which are listed below, not in any specific order:

- **Social determinants of health** (aka Opportunities for Health, Building Blocks for Health)
- **Perinatal health (infant and maternal)**, including upstream factors that influence mortality
- **Early childhood**
- **Beneficiary engagement**
- **Medicaid reform** (not a formal evaluation of the §1115 waiver, but special topics that could influence policy, such as more detailed analyses of, e.g., network adequacy, experiences of special populations, etc.)
- **Behavioral health integration**
- **LTSS** (non-dual and dual populations, analysis that could help with current and future design)
- **Opioids**

Though these topics span beyond Medicaid recipients, project proposals should focus on these priorities within Medicaid (e.g., early childhood in the context of the Medicaid population). The analyses should be performed using the Medicaid claims data currently available through the Carolina Cost and Quality Initiative (<http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/data/bcbsnc-claims-data-ccqi/database-description/>) (Data dictionary for the data can be found at the following URL: <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/data/bcbsnc-claims-data-ccqi/data-dictionaries/>) If additional or identifiable data (e.g. vital records, Controlled Substance Reporting System, social services data (e.g. SNAP and/or WIC), or Department of Correction) are determined to be necessary for the project, NC Medicaid staff will do their best to help researchers access those data, but note that such data use approvals cannot be guaranteed.

Project deliverables:

- A report containing findings of the research question
- A one-page executive summary designed for DHHS leadership, members of the North Carolina General Assembly, and the general public
- A presentation at DHHS to the Secretary and DHHS leadership, and
- An analytic file with aggregated data useful to NC Medicaid for subsequent analysis (e.g. county-level or monthly rates)

Researchers are encouraged to publish their findings in peer-reviewed literature, subject to the requirements of CCQI. (Researchers should review the CCQI guidelines for detail, but one requirement is that all journal articles and conference abstracts must be submitted to the Sheps Center to send on to NC Division of Health Benefits at least 45 days prior to publishing the research findings.)

There are two phases to proposal review. Phase 1 is a written proposal. In Phase 2, no more than eight finalists will provide an oral presentation to NC Medicaid leadership.

IMPORTANT: Interested parties are required to submit a non-binding notice of intent at

https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9B5kW9pxKfRKc29

An information webinar will be announced to those who have submitted their information through the above form. (Expected webinar date is the week of October 29-November 2).

Phase 1: Written proposal Due 8:00 am Monday, November 19, 2018. Please submit via email to kristie_thompson@unc.edu with the subject "MAST proposal".

Written proposal (PDF format) should be no more than 4 pages and contain the following elements:

- 1) Summary Overview
 - a. Project Title
 - b. Medicaid Priority Area (select a Medicaid priority area below).
 - i. Social determinants of health
 - ii. Perinatal health (infant and maternal)
 - iii. Early childhood
 - iv. Beneficiary engagement
 - v. Medicaid reform
 - vi. Behavioral health integration
 - vii. LTSS
 - viii. Opioids
 - ix. Other (specify)

- c. Principal Investigator Contact Information (name, degree, telephone number, email address)
 - d. Stand-alone two sentence project description
- 2) Detailed Summary (one to two paragraphs)
 - a. Statement of Problem/Hypothesis
 - b. Project Goals
 - c. Methods
- 3) Research Description & Questions
 - a. *Problem & Existing Evidence*: Identify the gaps in existing knowledge that the research is intended to fill. State the relevance of the research and its implications for Medicaid's priority areas from the perspectives of beneficiaries, and state and local stakeholders.
 - b. *Research Question*: Clearly state the purpose of the research. State the hypothesis(es).
 - c. *Approach*: Describe the project design and procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the proposed research study. Describe the general approach for data analysis and justify the approach. Describe anticipated limitations of the analysis.
 - d. *Data Needs/Sources*: Include information about any data other than Medicaid claims data that might be used. If there is compelling justification, it may be possible to include additional data, including identifiable data, for the projects.
 - e. *Potential Health and Financial Benefits*: Describe the potential value of the project for DHHS (financial benefits) and beneficiaries (health), including any Medicaid policy decisions that could be informed by findings from the research question.
 - f. *Staff Qualifications*: Identify the project leader and other senior staff involvement. Include a brief description of their qualifications and project role.
 - g. *Relationship to Other Projects*: Describe any relationships this project has to work previously funded by NC DHHS and/or currently using NC Medicaid claims.
 - h. *Timetable*: Provide a realistic schedule for the project work.
 - i. *Literature Citations*: Provide citations to published literature key to this proposal.
- 4) *Budget Justification*: Please give a short description of how budgeted funds will be allocated. **Direct costs should not exceed \$68,000.**

Phase 2: Oral Presentation

If necessary, proposals will be selected by Sheps Center and School of Social Work representatives to identify no more than 8 projects of potential interest to NC Medicaid. Researchers will provide a 10 minute proposal presentation to DHHS leadership. Each presentation will be followed with a short question and answer session of 5 minutes. Presentations will be conducted on **Friday, December 7, 2018 at the Dorothea Dix campus in Raleigh, North Carolina between 10AM and 12PM**. After hearing proposals, NC Medicaid leadership will accept, reject, or amend each project idea (likely requiring follow-up and coordination after the meeting).

The projects would be approved conditional upon making it through our data governance process (see CCQI website for process).

As of the release date for this call for proposals, the contract supporting this program is not yet in place. Although all parties expect it will be by mid-December, the MAST program is conditional on final contract execution between DHB and UNC.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who is eligible to be a principal investigator (PI)? University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill permanent employees, including faculty and non-faculty investigators. Students are not eligible to be a PI but can be included in the project.

What is the indirect rate / how will funds be administered? The funds will be administered by the Sheps Center. Researchers do not need to budget for indirect costs.

Questions: contact Kristie Thompson at 919-966-9484 or kristie_thompson@unc.edu.