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To: Developmental Disability (DD) Providers and Members

From: Sasha O'Connell, Deputy Director

Subject: Service Animal Benefit Removal

The annual cost of services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities must stay within an individually budgeted amount. Idaho Medicaid reviewed other state policies and found that service animals are generally not covered by commercial health insurance and other state Medicaid programs.

Idaho Medicaid has authorized 71 total service animals since coverage began in 2017, which has decreased the amount in individual budgets available for other services and supports. Requests are made infrequently, with just one new service animal having been authorized in 2025. In total, there are 17 active service animals that were funded by Medicaid. Idaho Medicaid has never funded guide dogs for people who are blind or visually impaired.

The state notified the public about its intention to end future coverage of service animals and sought feedback through public comment in October 2025. No comments were received. We are now implementing those changes for consumer directed services.

Effective July 1, 2026:

- Idaho Medicaid will no longer approve new requests for service animals.
- Idaho Medicaid will no longer cover annual healthcare and maintenance for service animals.
- Members with an existing approved service animal authorization may use their budget for the support until their current Support and Spending plan expires.

Members impacted by this change still have access to their approved budget amount and can request other services that may help meet their needs.

Thank you for participating in the Idaho Medicaid program.

SO/eb

The content of this guidance document is not new law but is an interpretation of existing law prepared by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to supply clarity to the public about existing requirements under the law. This document does not bind the public, except as authorized by law or as incorporated into a contract. For additional information or to provide input on this document, contact the Division of Medicaid's children's DD program by emailing medicaidchildrensdd@dhw.idaho.gov or by calling 208-334-6500.