

III. Budget issue: Medicaid Expansion

Behavioral health services in the Medicaid Program:

Title XIX of the Social Security Act is the Medicaid section. It does not specifically address behavioral health, but describes inpatient and outpatient services and other health services such as rehab which are interpreted by CMS and AHCCCS as including behavioral health as covered services. The 1115 Waiver under which AHCCCS operates the Medicaid program specifies some behavioral health services as part of the benefit package. In addition, the Wellstone-Domenici Mental Health Parity Act of 2008 applies parity for mental health services to Medicaid managed care health plans. AHCCCS cites Medicaid requirements under the Social Security Act and the 1115 waiver as the basis for a “comprehensive benefit for people with mental health and substance abuse treatment needs”. This language from Monica Coury, Assistant Director, Office of Intergovernmental Relations, AHCCCS.

Also note that the Affordable Health Act requires inclusion of behavioral health services in health insurance plans as essential health benefits.