

Belcourt Area Water Tour: A Tribal View of Water on August 3

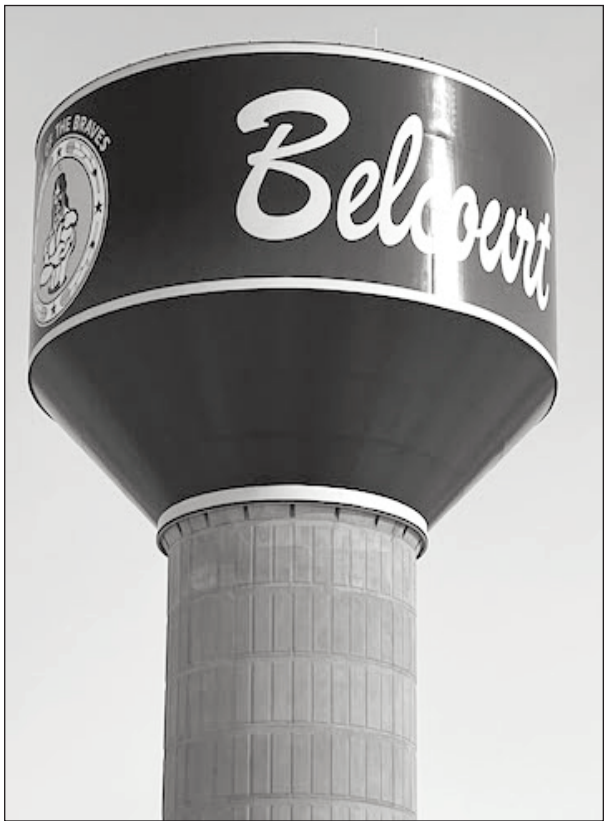
The North Dakota Water Education Foundation invites the public to participate in its annual water tours this summer across North Dakota. These tours offer a firsthand look at North Dakota’s critical water issues and initiatives.

On Monday, August 3, the public is invited to join the “A Tribal View of Water” tour beginning and ending in Belcourt. Nibi (water) is sacred and vital to all life within the environment.

Learn how the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa views water and uses this vital natural resource for drinking, agriculture, and environmental health. Travel to the United States- Canada border and enjoy the International Peace Garden, a living monument to the ideals of friendship and cooperation among nations (passport or birth certificate and photo ID required).

Registration is \$40 per person and includes tour transportation, lunch, refreshments, informational materials, and a one-year digital subscription to the North Dakota Water magazine.

For more information, visit <https://ndwater.org/events>. To register, contact the North Dakota Water Education Foundation at 701-223-8332 or jellingson@ndwater.net.



States gird for new Medicaid ‘medically frail’ rule

Even enrollees with serious illnesses and disabilities will have to prove they can’t work

BY SHALINA CHATLANI
ND Monitor

State Medicaid agencies are concerned that many sick and disabled enrollees will lose their coverage because the Trump administration is narrowing the definition of who is “medically frail” enough to get an exemption from new work requirements.

Under the tax and spending law President Donald Trump signed a year ago, states that have expanded Medicaid to cover more adults under the Affordable Care Act — 40 states plus the District of Columbia — must mandate that those adults work, go to school or volunteer for at least 80 hours a month.

The so-called One Big Beautiful Bill Act exempts Medicaid recipients who are “medically frail,” with serious illnesses or disabilities. However, on June 1 the Trump administration published interim guidelines for implementing the law that specify that in order to qualify for the “medically frail” designation, a person must have a significant health condition and be significantly impaired in their ability to work.

“This rule helps Americans build skills and independence through work, education, job training, or community service, creating new opportunities for themselves and their families,” said Dr. Mehmet Oz, director for the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, in a statement earlier this month announcing the new guidance.

But states had been operating under the assumption that they would use the federal government’s traditional “medically frail” designation, which includes five distinct categories of disabilities and illnesses but does not require Medicaid agencies to determine whether the person can work.

States already were scrambling to set up systems to enforce the new work rules by the January 2027 deadline, according to Jocelyn Guyer, senior managing director at Manatt Health, a consulting firm that advises state Medicaid agencies.

“Now, it’s not enough just to have that diagnosis. You may need to go to your doctor and get a special note,” Guyer said. “So, it’s turned it from a very straightforward protection of people with disabilities and significant health conditions into a paperwork morass, where all of a sudden they have to get their healthcare providers involved in documenting and assessing their capacity to work.”

Earlier this week, 25 Democratic-led states plus the District of Columbia sued the Trump administration over the work requirement, largely on the basis of the changed “medically frail” guidelines.

Several state Medicaid agencies said they’re struggling to understand what they’ll have to do to comply. Even before the “medically frail” change, states were hiring consultants and creating IT systems to verify and track enrollees’ working status, which they never had to do before.

“Most states were working on identifying a number of diagnoses that may be able to meet that definition in hopes that that would align with what the final guidance said,” Melanie Bush, deputy secretary for the North Carolina Medicaid Division of Health Benefits, said. “But the layering in of impaired ability to work — there’s not necessarily a data source that aligns with that.”

Bush said states are focused on figuring out how to prevent eligible people from dropping off the rolls just because of paperwork and logistical challenges. One analysis estimates that five million people could lose coverage from the original work requirements alone. State leaders and consultants worry that figure could rise significantly with the new guidance.

Healthcare providers are worried, too.

“This is not what we’re trained to do. Most of us do not do disability determinations and em-



Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator of the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, speaks at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C., in December. CMS last month released guidance on how states should implement new Medicaid work requirements. (Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

ployability assessments regularly, and even if we do feel comfortable with that role, we don’t have time, we’re not like we’re not paid to do that,” said Dr. Benjamin Sommers, a health economist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

“Primary care providers, in particular, are already overworked and burning out.”

Still, Medicaid directors have experience in dealing with major shifts within the program, according to Michael Heifetz, a managing director at consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal and a former Medicaid director in Wisconsin. Heifetz said states regularly face major rule changes and tight timeline challenges, and with greater access to advanced technology to help automate some tasks, he’s confident they will be able to mitigate enrollment losses.

Another big help, he said, is that Medicaid enrollees will be allowed to “self-attest” to their eligibility for an exemption through 2027.

“States will work through it, and they will again work with the advocacy community to minimize the impact on beneficiaries,” Heifetz said. “There is still some ambiguity in the rule about how self-attestation will work in 2027, because the rule reads that other sources of information and documentation must still be sought, but in the end, self-attestation will prevail.”

Jennifer Tolbert, an expert on state health policy at health research group KFF, said there are several data sources states might tap to determine a person’s ability to work, such as insurance claims, prescriptions and a per-

son’s use of durable medical equipment.

She cautioned, however, that it will be a challenge to use such data to make thoughtful determinations, especially for people with substance use disorders and mental health issues.

To keep eligible people enrolled, California will use text message alerts, mailed notices, and electronic reminders to make sure recipients meet verification deadlines, according to Anthony Cava, a spokesperson for California Department of Health Care Services. Nevertheless, Cava said, the state is concerned that people, including those with serious illnesses and disabilities, will drop off the rolls “solely due to paperwork barriers.”

Adela Flores-Brennan, Colorado’s Medicaid director, said states could come under fire for making errors.

“We’re also worried about audits,” Flores-Brennan said. “There are new penalties for states, bigger penalties for states related to error rates, and the level of complexity that is being introduced into eligibility right now is making an environment that is ripe for errors because it’s confusing and it’s complex.”

Stateline reporter Shalina Chatlani can be reached at schatlani@stateline.org

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BELCOURT SCHOOL DISTRICT #7

1207 William Hardesty Street, Belcourt, ND 58316

AGENDA

Board of Education

Belcourt School District #7

Tuesday, July 14th, 2026 @ 12 NOON

Board Room



1. CALL TO ORDER

2. OPENING PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. OATH of OFFICE (Teri LaFountain, Dallas Morin & Dennis DeCoteau) — Duane Poitra

4. SELECTION of BOARD PRESIDENT — Duane Poitra

5. SELECTION of VICE PRESIDENT — Duane Poitra

6. OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

7. ADOPTION of AGENDA

8. ADOPTION of CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of the Indian Policies & Procedures Waiver from TMBCI for FY 2028 Impact Aid Application Year — Duane Poitra
- Approval to Apply for Impact Aid & Join Impact Aid Associations — Duane Poitra
- Approval of the Monthly Regular Board Meetings for 2026 to 2027 — Duane Poitra
- Approval of Insurance Premiums 2026-2027 — Duane Poitra
- Designation of Official Newspaper — Duane Poitra
- Certification of Transportation Report to ND DPI 2025-26 — Duane Poitra
- Approval of SY 2026-2027 TMHS IDEA B Application — Danielle Sloan
- Designate Official Depository — Duane Poitra
- Approval of Designated Purchasing Agents 2026-2027 — Duane Poitra
- Designate Authorized Representative for Title I (Levi Gourneau) — Duane Poitra
- Designate Authorized Representative for Title II A7D (Levi Gourneau) — Duane Poitra
- Designate Authorized Representative for Title IV (Levi Gourneau) — Duane Poitra
- Designate Authorized Representative for Title VI (Levi Gourneau) — Duane Poitra
- Designate Authorized Representative for ND Rural Low Income Grant (Levi Gourneau) — Duane Poitra
- Designate Authorized Representative for USDA Summer Lunch Program, Food Service, Fresh Fruit & Vegetables Programs (Earl Demery) — Duane Poitra
- Designate Authorized Representative for Title VII 874 Impact Aid & E-Rate (Duane Poitra) — Earl Demery
- Approval of a Plexi-pave Coated Surface to the EL Outdoor Basketball Court \$28,587 — Duane Poitra
- Approval of Minutes 06/15/26 @12:00
- Approval of Minutes 06/17/26 @ 11:30
- Superintendent/Athletic Director Report — Dr. Shane Martin
- TMCS Assistant Superintendent/HR Director Report — Levi Gourneau
- TMMS Principal Report — Gaillard Peltier
- Approval of High School Grant Budget Revision in the amount of \$802,655.00 — Earl Demery/Duane Poitra
- Approval of Rental/Use of a district school bus with driver to Mikinok Enterprises — Duane Poitra
- Bid Award for the Football Field Parking Lot Project — Duane Poitra
- Approval to dispose of FY2016-17 and FY2017-18 Accounts Payable Records — Earl Demery
- AA. Business Manager Reports — Duane Poitra
- BB. TMHS Principal Report — Brad LaRocque

9. BE LEGENDARY

- TMCS 2025-2026 Math Admin Report — Claudette Gourneau
- TMCS 2025-2026 ELA Admin Report — Claudette Gourneau
- Board Self-Guardrails — Laurie Elliott

10. OLD BUSINESS

- NONE

11. NEW BUSINESS

- Designation of Board President and Business Manager as Authorized Signatures — Duane Poitra
- Appoint (1) School Board Member to the **100-297 HS Grant Board** — Duane Poitra
- Appoint (1) School Board Member to the **TMHS SIT** (School Improvement Team) Committee — Duane Poitra
- Appoint (3) School Board Members to the **Transportation** Committee — Duane Poitra
- Appoint (3) School Board Members to the **Budget** Committee — Duane Poitra
- Appoint (3) School Board Members to the **Construction/Facilities** Committee — Duane Poitra
- Appoint **BSD#7 Policy** Committee (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Dennis DeCoteau) — Levi Gourneau
- Appoint (2) Board Members **Turtle Mountain Area Career Technology Center Committee (TMACTC)** — Duane Poitra
- Approval of Accounts Payable — Earl Demery

12. ADJOURNMENT

**100-297 High School Grant
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, July 14th, 2026 @ 12:45p.m.
Board Room,
1207 William Hardesty Street
Belcourt, ND 58316**



TENTATIVE AGENDA

1. CALL to ORDER

2. OATH of OFFICE

3. SELECTION of BOARD PRESIDENT — Duane Poitra

4. SELECTION of VICE PRESIDENT — Duane Poitra

5. ADOPTION of AGENDA

6. ADOPTION of CONSENT AGENDA

- Designation of TMHS 100-297 Grant Purchasing Agents 2026-2027 — Duane Poitra
- Approval of SY2026-2027 TMHS 100-297 Grant IDEA B Application — Danielle Sloan
- Approval of Minutes 06/15/26 @ 11:30
- Approval of the HS Grant Budget Revision in the amount of \$802,655.00 - Earl Demery/Duane Poitra
- Business Manager Reports - Duane Poitra
- Approval of Accounts Payable - Earl Demery
- TMHS Board Report - Brad LaRocque

7. OLD BUSINESS:

- NONE

8. NEW BUSINESS:

- Appoint (1) Board Member to the HS SIT Committee - Duane Poitra
- Designation of President & Business Manager as Authorized Signatures - Duane Poitra

9. ADJOURNMENT