



## **Traditional Healing as Medicine: New Mexico's Medicaid Coverage of Traditional Health Care Practices**

April 22, 2026

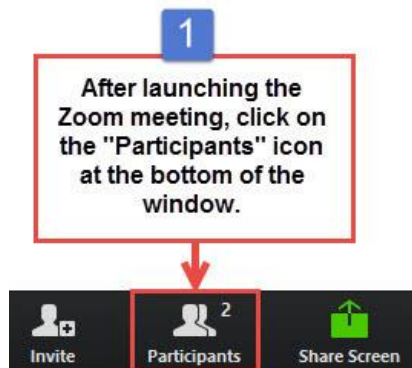
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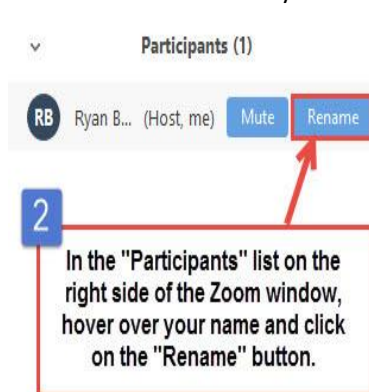


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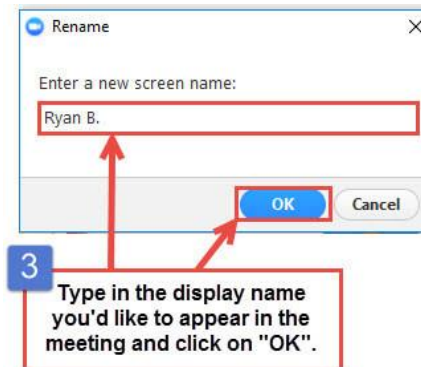
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CMS LTSS Webinar · April 22, 2026

# Traditional Healing as Medicine

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New Mexico's Medicaid Coverage of  
Traditional Health Care Practices

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ABOUT THE PRESENTER



# Karol Dixon, JD, MPH

Deg Hit'an Athabascan

Vice President, Tribalhealth Alliance, LLC

Former Vice President, Kauffman and Associates, Inc. (KAI)

# Webinar Objectives

1

## The Benefit

Provide an overview of NM's THCP Medicaid benefit, including eligible populations and covered services

2

## The Providers

Explain the roles of traditional healers and natural helpers within the Medicaid system

3

## Whole-Person Well-Being

Offer insight into how THCP coverage supports whole-person well-being for Native elders and people with disabilities

COMMUNITY VOICE & POLICY DESIGN

# The Community Behind the Policy

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Traditional healing coverage didn't emerge from a policy manual. It came from community. Here is what tribal partners said, and how it shaped New Mexico's response.

## What Tribal Partners Told Us

**Cultural  
Alignment**

**Historical  
Trauma  
& Disrupted  
Care**

**Fragmented  
Navigation**

**Barriers to Access**

*Source: NM Behavioral Health Assessment & Feasibility Study—254 participants across three public listening sessions, including a dedicated tribal partner session, 40 interviews, and 26 written comments. Manatt Health Strategies, LLC · KAI, January 2026.*

# How New Mexico Responded

## Community-Led Design

THCP coverage was developed in direct collaboration with tribal leaders, traditional healers, community advocates, and clinical partners over many months.

## Cultural Integrity Built In

Cultural integrity, provider autonomy, and member choice are principles that emerged from months of collaboration with tribal leaders, traditional healers, community advocates, and clinical partners.

## LTSS Connection

For Native elders and people with disabilities, the THCP benefit directly supports the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being that person-centered care principles of LTSS recognize but standard Medicaid rarely reaches.

# New Mexico's Tribal Landscape and Context

## New Mexico's Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes

23 federally recognized sovereign nations—each with its own government, lifeways, traditions, and culture. Approximately 12.4% of NM population (2020 Census).

## Tribally Identified Needs

“Mental health and addiction crises in Indian Country are at catastrophic levels.”

“The lack of IHS or tribally operated elder care, including long-term care, is felt across Indian Country.”

## Evidence Base

Research supports what communities have known for generations, that THCP improve mental health symptoms, quality of life, and outcomes, including for people with SUD.

# The Policy Foundation

## Legal Foundation

The Affordable Care Act explicitly authorized HHS to promote THCP. Section 1115 Medicaid demonstration waivers give states authority to cover services not otherwise available through Medicaid. Four states have now used that authority to cover traditional healing.

## Medicaid's Role

Medicaid accounts for nearly two-thirds of health coverage payments to IHS and tribal facilities, and 55% of patients at urban Indian organizations have Medicaid or CHIP coverage.

## Why This Matters for New Mexico

New Mexico is one of the first states to receive federal authority under its 1115 demonstration to reimburse tribes, nations, and pueblos for THCP.

# What Is Traditional Healing?

*“The sum total of the knowledge, skill, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement, or treatment of physical and mental illness.”*

— World Health Organization

## In New Mexico

*“Traditional healing is a system of culturally appropriate healing methods developed and practiced for generations of tribal healers who apply these methods for physical, mental, and emotional healing. The practices shall be in accordance with that tribal nation’s established and accepted healing practices.”*

— LOD #69, New Mexico Health Care Authority, November 15, 2025

# New Mexico Makes History

NM HCA Press Release · March 10, 2026

## Cabinet Secretary Kari Armijo

*“Our state’s diverse cultural heritage is one of our greatest strengths. Traditional healing practices have played a vital role in community health and well-being for generations of Native Americans.”*

## Alanna Dancis, Acting Medicaid Director, Medical Assistance Division

*“By integrating traditional healing, New Mexico is expanding meaningful access to care that aligns with individuals’ values, beliefs, and cultural identities.”*

## Community Partnership

*Developed in collaboration with tribal leaders, traditional healers, community advocates, and clinical partners.*



KRQE News: New Mexico Medicaid Now Covers  
Traditional Healing Practices for Native Americans

March 13, 2026 | KRQE News 13, Albuquerque, NM

THE BENEFIT

# From Policy to Practice

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Who is eligible, who provides care, what is covered, and how it works—in New Mexico and beyond

# Who It Covers

## Eligible Members

Medicaid beneficiaries who are able to receive services at IHS, tribal, or urban Indian organization (UIO) facilities—as determined by the facility.

## How to Access

Services are available upon referral from a health care practitioner. Both fee-for-service and Turquoise Care managed care members are eligible.

## Qualifying Facilities

Services must be provided through IHS, tribal 638, or UIO facilities. This ensures traditional healing is delivered by culturally appropriate, qualified practitioners. Counties, nonprofits, and other non-qualifying entities are not covered providers under this benefit.

# Traditional Healers and Natural Helpers

## Traditional Healer

**H0051**

Recognized as a traditional leader in good standing with a Native American tribe, nation, pueblo, or band

Two or more years of experience as a recognized Native American spiritual leader

Knowledge, skills, and practices handed down through generations, validated by tribal elders

## Natural Helper

**T1016**

May be a spiritual leader, elected official, paraprofessional, or other trusted community member

Can work under or alongside a traditional healer

Seeks to deliver health, recovery, and social support in the context of tribal cultures

All practitioners must be employed by or contracted with a qualifying facility. Each facility determines practitioner qualifications, establishes its own qualification methods, bills only for qualified practitioners, and provides documentation to the state upon request.

# Provider Requirements

## Medicaid Enrollment

Providers must have active enrollment in NM Medicaid at time of service.

## Notice of Intent (NOI)

Facilities submit a NOI and receive NM Health Care Authority approval before claiming reimbursement.

## Tribal-Determined Standards

Practice guidelines and documentation requirements are set by each tribe, nation, or pueblo. Traditional healers and natural helpers must comply with the standards of their community—not a state-imposed framework.

*For step-by-step enrollment and billing guidance, see the [NM HCA Provider Toolkit](#).*

# Covered Services

## Six Covered Service Types

- 1 Screening and Admission
- 2 Orientation
- 3 Assessment
- 4 Traditional Healing Treatment Plan
- 5 Translate and Interpret
- 6 Provide Follow-Up Services

## How Services Are Delivered

- No Prior Authorization
- Telehealth Available
- Any Place of Service
- Group Settings

# Accessing the Benefit

## 1 Referral

Member receives referral from a health care practitioner. No prior authorization required.

## 2 Verification

Facility confirms active Medicaid enrollment.

## 3 Service Delivery

Services provided in accordance with that tribe's, nation's, or pueblo's established and accepted healing practices.

*Services can be provided in clinics, homes, or ceremonial spaces, so healing happens in culturally meaningful environments.*

# New Mexico Billing: Key Facts

**IHS All-Inclusive Rate (AIR): \$826 per encounter, effective January 1, 2026**

## Codes & Forms

**H0051** Traditional healer

**T1016** Natural helper

**UB-04** AI/AN—billed at OMB rate

**CMS-1500** Non-AI/AN—fee schedule rate

## Utilization Rules

**No PA required** for TH or NH services

**One per day** H0051 and T1016—billable on the same day

**No monthly limit** as long as services are medically necessary

**Group billing** Bill once per participating Medicaid member per session

*For complete billing guidance including revenue codes, inpatient, transportation, retroactive billing, and timely filing—see the NM HCA Provider Toolkit.*

IN PRACTICE

# Beyond the Billing Code

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Healing as communities define it—and what it means for the whole person

# What Traditional Healing May Look Like

## Ceremonies

Diagnostic · Purification  
Protection Way  
Blessingway  
Native American Church

## Counseling and Guidance

Traditional counseling  
Talking circles  
Cultural education

## Healing Practices

Sweat lodge · Plant  
medicines  
Traditional cultural outings  
Adventure-based activities

## Aftercare and Follow-Up

Cultural orientation  
Case staffing  
Treatment plans

*Examples from the Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral & Mental Health Services · [ndbmhs.org](https://www.ndbmhs.org)*

*Each tribe, nation, and pueblo determines what traditional healing looks like within their community. These examples reflect one nation's practices; it is not a universal or exhaustive list.*

# Whole-Person Care in Practice

*“This policy really aligns with the health system of how Native communities understand health and healing ... health is just not in the physical form ... we have relational care or self-care.”*

*— Norman Coeeyate, Associate Director, Center for Native American Health, UNM Health Sciences | KRQE, March 2026*

## Physical

Healing practices address chronic conditions, pain, and physical health—developed over generations.

## Mental & Emotional

Ceremony, spiritual grounding, and cultural connection address behavioral health and SUD.

## Spiritual

Honors the sacred dimension—ceremony, prayer, and connection.

## Relational & Self-Care

Connection to community, family, and the land—the whole person in relationship, not just the diagnosis.

# Supporting AI/AN Elders and People with Disabilities

~35%

of AI/AN adults under age 64 are covered by Medicaid

>60%

of AI/AN children covered by Medicaid

~65%

of IHS/tribal facility payments come from Medicaid

- THCP complement HCBS; AI/AN elders can receive traditional healing alongside home-based care, personal care services, and behavioral health services.
- Not requiring prior authorization and having the flexibility to provide THCP in any setting directly address any mobility- and transportation-related barriers that AI/AN elders and people with disabilities might face.

# THCP Strengthen and Complement LTSS

## HCBS Integration

THCP can be delivered alongside home- and community-based services.

## Removing Barriers to Access

No prior authorization required. Services in any setting, via telehealth and in group settings.

## Strengthening Tribal Provider Capacity

MCOs must work collaboratively with I/T facilities to support THCP enrollment, contracting, and billing, and to streamline provider administrative burden.

## Advancing Health for Our People

THCP is one important piece of whole-person care—culturally rooted, community-defined, and honoring identity, traditions, and health.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

# What Communities Made Possible

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Now let's look at where the rest of the country stands—and what other states can do.

# THCP Coverage: Four States Leading the Way

## California

Effective: 3/21/2025

SUD-focused coverage through Drug Medi-Cal. Expires 12/31/2026; extension pending.

## Oregon

Effective: 5/1/2025

Broad Medicaid benefit. Traditional Knowledge Keepers. Claims go directly to OHA.

## New Mexico

Effective: 10/1/2025

Broad Medicaid benefit covering FFS and managed care.

## Arizona

Effective: 10/1/2025

Broad benefit— inpatient and outpatient. Each facility defines services.

**Up next:** Washington state is preparing its 1115 THCP application.

# Reimbursement for Traditional Healing

1

## Understand the Federal Pathway

CMS has approved THCP authority in four states through 1115 demonstrations.

2

## Engage Early and Authentically

When states engage authentically with existing THCP expertise, the benefit design reflects it.

3

## Ensure the State Respects Your Practices

The framework must be flexible enough to honor your tribe's healing traditions, qualifications, and cultural protocols.

4

## Connect It to LTSS and Elder Care

Frame THCP as a complement to HCBS, not a separate track.

# Resources: New Mexico and Background

Karol Dixon  
Tribalhealth Alliance, LLC  
CMS Division of Tribal Affairs  
LTSS Webinar | April 22, 2026

## New Mexico Policy and Implementation

### NM HCA THCP Web Page

<https://www.hca.nm.gov/traditional-health-care-practices/>

### NM LOD #69 — THCP Reimbursement (November 15, 2025)

<https://www.hca.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-LOD-69-Traditional-Healing-Reimbursement-1.pdf>

### MAD Supplement 25-14 — FFS Billing (December 19, 2025)

<https://www.hca.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/Supplement-25-14-Traditional-Health-Care-Practices.pdf>

### NM HCA Provider Toolkit — Traditional Health Care Practices (February 11, 2026)

[https://www.hca.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/NM-THCP-Provider-Toolkit\\_260211.pdf](https://www.hca.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/NM-THCP-Provider-Toolkit_260211.pdf)

### NM HCA Press Release — NM Medicaid Covers Traditional Healing (March 10, 2026)

<https://www.hca.nm.gov/2026/03/10/new-mexico-medicaid-now-covers-traditional-healing-practices-for-native-american-members/>

### KRQE News: NM Medicaid Covers Traditional Healing (March 13, 2026)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ52QBK-YYg>

## Federal Authority and Background

### CMS Turquoise Care 1115 Approval Letter & STCs (October 16, 2024)

<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demonstrations/downloads/nm-turquoise-care-dmstrtn-aprvl-10162024.pdf>

### IHS Reimbursement Rates for Calendar Year 2026 — 91 FR 2787 (January 22, 2026)

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/22/2026-01178/reimbursement-rates-for-calendar-year-2026>

### IHS FY2026 Tribal Budget Formulation — National Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup

<https://legacy.nihb.org/resources/NIHB-FY26-Budget.pdf>

# Resources: National Landscape and Community

Karol Dixon  
Tribalhealth Alliance, LLC  
CMS Division of Tribal Affairs  
LTSS Webinar | April 22, 2026

## Other State Models

### Arizona AHCCCS Traditional Healing

<https://www.azahcccs.gov/AmericanIndians/TraditionalHealing/index.html>

### California DHCS Traditional Health Care Practices

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/Traditional-Health-Care-Practices.aspx>

### Oregon OAR 410-146-0470 — Traditional Health Care Practices

<https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/view.action?ruleNumber=410-146-0470>

### Washington State THCP Waiver Application (January 2026)

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/who-we-are/tribal-affairs/traditional-health-care-practices-waiver>

## Community and Tribal Resources

### Navajo Nation DBMHS Traditional Services

<https://www.nndbmhs.org/treatment-services/traditional-services/>

### NM Indian Affairs Department — Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes

<https://www.iad.nm.gov/nations-pueblos-tribes/tribal-directory/>

### NM Behavioral Health Assessment and Feasibility Study — Manatt Health Strategies, LLC (January 2026)

<https://www.hca.nm.gov/behavioral-health-assessment/>

## Additional Background

### ASPE—How Increased Funding Can Advance the Mission of the IHS to Improve Health Outcomes for AI/ANs (July 2022)

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/e7b3d02affdda1949c215f57b65b5541/aspe-ihs-funding-disparities-report.pdf>

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Thank You

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**Questions?**

