



Orange County Realignment: Frequently Asked Questions for Individuals and Families

These questions and answers are provided to help Orange County individuals and families better understand the proposed transition of the County's management of Medicaid and uninsured benefits from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare to Alliance Health.

What is this all about?

On November 5, 2020, the Orange County Board of Commissioners voted to begin the process of seeking State approval to change which of North Carolina's Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs) has responsibility for managing behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD) services for Orange County residents who are insured by Medicaid or who have no health insurance (such residents receiving services are "Members"). This process is called "disengagement" or "realignment." In this case, the County is seeking to transition that responsibility from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare to Alliance Health. On February 16, 2021, the Commissioners unanimously approved a Disengagement Plan and posted that plan for public comment. Any disengagement from Cardinal and realignment of the County with Alliance will require the approval of the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS). If approved by the Secretary, it is the intent of both the County and Alliance to ensure a seamless transition from Cardinal to Alliance and prevent any disruption in services for Members and providers.

More information about this realignment process is available on the Orange County website at www.orangecountync.gov/2634/LMEMCO-Disengagement and the Alliance Health website at www.alliancehealthplan.org/about-alliance/orange-county-lme-mco-disengagement/.

When will this realignment take place?

We expect that Alliance Health will begin managing these services for Orange County Members on January 1, 2022. As noted above, Orange County must first get approval for this realignment from the Secretary of NC DHHS. Once approved, Orange County and Alliance will go through a comprehensive Implementation Phase. This Implementation Phase will take at least six months. We anticipate that the Implementation Phase will begin in the summer of 2021.

The following are some important dates in the realignment process:

- **February 17, 2021** – Orange County published the Disengagement Plan for 60 days public comment
- **April 18, 2021** – Orange County posted public comments received for 30 days
- **May 19, 2021** – Orange County will submit the Request to Disengage to the Secretary of NC DHHS
- **August 17, 2021** – Deadline for the Secretary to approve or deny the Request to Disengage

- **Date of Secretary Approval–December 31, 2021** – Implementation Phase
- **January 1, 2022** – Proposed effective date of realignment

Will things change for me?

Not immediately. As noted above, we anticipate that Alliance Health will begin to manage behavioral health and I/DD services for Orange County Members beginning January 1, 2022, the effective date of the County's realignment. These services are currently managed by Cardinal Innovations Healthcare and Cardinal will continue such management through December 2021.

People who are currently covered by the Alliance Health Plan will not be affected by this Orange County realignment.

I currently receive services in Orange County that are managed by Cardinal. Will I get to keep my same service provider?

Yes, so long as your service provider agrees to join the Alliance Network. Alliance will work with providers currently serving Orange County Members to include them in Alliance's Provider Network. Alliance will also honor all services that have already been authorized, a Member's annual plan, and other existing documentation and care decisions to help ensure a smooth transition and prevent any disruption in services.

Do I have to do anything?

No. If you are currently receiving mental health, substance use disorder, or I/DD services through Cardinal, you will be automatically enrolled with Alliance when the realignment takes place in January 2022.

What experience do Alliance's care managers have?

Alliance's care managers serve a variety of groups including people living with I/DD, in recovery from mental health and substance use disorder issues, and survivors of traumatic brain injury (TBI). Our 200+ Care Management staff are trained to support children and adults specific to the programs in which they are enrolled and according to the services that they receive. Our staff is diverse in their years of experience and many have professional work experience as providers and practitioners of behavioral health services as well as service managers through the LME/MCO system. Some have worked for multiple LME/MCOs. In addition, we have staff who have lived experience themselves or have experience supporting family members living with I/DD, mental health or substance use disorder issues, or TBI. Alliance's care managers have high integrity and compassion in the way that they approach their work.

As part of our ongoing quality measures, an annual survey is offered to each Member served by the Alliance Care Management Department to check on our customers' experiences with care management. We encourage input on our operations and process improvement through Consumer and Family Advisory Committees (CFACs), stakeholder groups, and our Quality Management Department.

Does Alliance allocate Innovations Waiver slots differently than Cardinal?

No. North Carolina equitably distributes Innovations Waiver slots throughout the state based on county population. LME/MCOs then equitably distribute the slots within their respective catchment areas based on county population percentage of the total population of an LME/MCO's service area. No Orange County resident with an Innovations slot currently will lose their slot when realignment occurs.

What if I have other questions?

You can visit the Orange County website at www.orangecountync.gov/2634/LMEMCO-Disengagement and the Alliance Health website at www.alliancehealthplan.org/about-alliance/orange-county-lme-mco-disengagement/ for the latest information.