



State of Vermont  
Agency of Human Services  
280 State Drive, Center Building  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000

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# Global Commitment Register

March 29, 2023

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GCR 23-032  
PROPOSED

## **Disabled Children's Home Care/Katie Beckett Institutional Level of Care**

**Topic:** The Vermont Medicaid Program is adopting a standardized clinical assessment tool for Disabled Children's Home Care/Katie Beckett Eligibility.

### **Policy Summary:**

The Vermont Medicaid program is adopting the use of a standardized clinical assessment tool beginning on January 1, 2024 for all new and renewed applications for Disabled Child in Home Care (DCHC), commonly referred to as "Katie Beckett". Standardized clinical tools are used broadly in Vermont Medicaid and in Medicaid programs across the nation because doing so is best practice and ensures unbiased, objective, and consistent outcomes. Implementation of the proposed tool does not change the legal standard for qualifying for Katie Beckett. If the use of the tool leads to a denial or a proposed termination of Medicaid, the family continues to have the right to appeal to Vermont's Human Services Board.

A copy of the [proposed assessment tool](#) is found here.

### What is Disabled Child in Home Care?

DCHC is a pathway for Medicaid eligibility for disabled children (age 18 or younger) who require an institutional level of care and whose family's income is too high to qualify for Dr. Dynasaur.

DCHC/Katie Beckett is unique among the Medicaid program, in that it only counts the income and assets of the child, and because to be eligible a child must not only be determined disabled by the Social Security Administration, but also must be determined to require an institutional level of care. Like the child it was named after in the 1980s, Katie Beckett eligibility is for children who can't otherwise qualify for Medicaid due to income or resources but have such severe health care needs that they require an institutional level of care AND it's been determined that it would be appropriate for them to receive these services in the home instead of in an institution.

To qualify for DCHC Medicaid a child must:

- Be under the age of 19;
- Have income and resources that are below the applicable Medicaid income and resource eligibility thresholds;
- Be determined disabled pursuant to Social Security Administration’s disability criteria;
- Require the level of care provided in a medical institution; and
  - A medical institution means:
    - Hospital,
    - Skilled Nursing Facility,
    - Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with a Developmental Disability, or
    - Psychiatric Hospital
- Can receive the appropriate level of care outside of a medical institution and the cost of such care is no greater than the cost of institutional level of care in a medical institution.

The child does not have to be institutionalized to be eligible for DCHC Medicaid. Clinical evidence must demonstrate that a child requires an institutional level of care.

The Agency of Human Services (AHS) recognizes that DCHC/Katie Beckett is a critical lifeline to families, and it is the intention to uphold the integrity of this program in order to preserve equitable access to those entitled to be served under the Medicaid program.

Proposed Clinical Assessment Tool:

Vermont Medicaid will adopt a standardized clinical assessment tool in deciding level of care decisions in order to make DCHC/Katie Beckett eligibility decisions more objective, fair, and consistent. Currently, there is no standard criteria or tool for AHS to make DCHC/Katie Beckett level of care decisions, which creates confusion among providers and families as to who may be eligible for the program, has resulted in unequal and inconsistent access to the program, raises questions of accuracy and fairness, and creates concerns about compliance with federal law.

To address these problems, AHS will move to a standardized eligibility tool to promote objective, evidence based, unbiased, accurate, and consistent decision making. The proposed tool has been designed to be as objective as possible to achieve the highest “interrater reliability.” This means that two screeners would answer the same way for the same individual. The proposed tool has been broadly tested by an interdisciplinary team that includes numerous pediatricians, mental health clinicians, pediatric palliative care physicians and nurse practitioners, family medicine physicians, pediatric psychologists, nurses, and developmental disability experts.

Once the tool is finalized, following public input, AHS will work to train clinical staff on its implementation, as well as better educate providers, families, and care teams around the DCHC/Katie Beckett program, its eligibility requirements, and application process. The tool will be administered by trained clinicians.

**Effective Date:**  
January 1, 2024

**Authority/Legal Basis:**

[Medicaid State Plan](#)

[HBEE 8.05\(k\)\(6\)](#)

**Population Affected:**

Children under 19

**Fiscal Impact:**

This change is expected to be budget neutral.

**Public Comment Period:**

March 29, 2023 – April 28, 2023

Send comments to:

Medicaid Policy Unit

280 State Drive, Center Building

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Or submit via e-mail to [AHS.MedicaidPolicy@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.MedicaidPolicy@vermont.gov).

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