



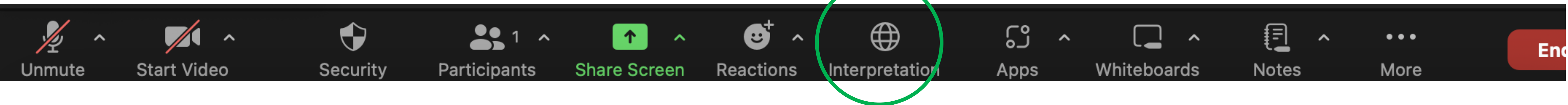
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# Benefits Application Best Practices for Unhoused Individuals

April 11th, 2024

# Interpretation

- Click the globe to access Spanish interpretation



# Agenda

- Welcome & Logistics
- Introduction to SOAR Work, Adriana Diaz, NCCEH
- Navigator Highlight, Juanita Thomas
- Beneficiary Rights and Responsibilities, Gina Hamilton, NCDHHS
- Closing

# Logistics

- This meeting is being recorded.
- The slides, recording, and notes will be posted on Care Share's Medicaid Expansion Page, <https://equitypn.org/nc-medicaid-expansion/>
- Please feel free to raise your hand or add a question/ comment to the chat during our time together

# Definition of Homelessness

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines "experiencing homelessness" as:

- An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, such as those living in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or places not meant for habitation, or
- An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence (within 14 days), provided that no subsequent housing has been identified and the individual/family lacks support networks or resources needed to obtain housing, or
- Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth who qualify under other Federal statutes, such as the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment, or
- An individual or family who is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, has no other residence, and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

# Commonly Voiced Barriers

Enrollment assisters have identified the following barriers in completing benefits applications for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness:

- Having an address to list on their applications
- Creation of NC IDs for people that don't have email addresses
- Following up with someone is more difficult if they don't have a phone number or email address
- Once on Medicaid, the \$4 copay charged for some services may create a financial barrier

# Introduction to SOAR Work

Adriana Diaz, SOAR Captain / Project Specialist,  
NC Coalition to End Homelessness

# NC SOAR – SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery

April 11, 2024





# Coming to you from the North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness!

- Also known as NCCEH
- Houses the State Team Lead for NC SOAR
- 501(c)(3) membership non-profit that provides technical assistance and training, and works to end homelessness by advocating for systemic change, securing resources, and creating alliances
- Serves at the Collaborative Applicant for the NC Balance of State Continuum of Care (79 counties)
- Small organization (16 staff)



# What is SOAR?

- A model for assisting eligible individuals to apply for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits
- For individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder, or other physical disabilities
- Sponsored by SAMHSA in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 2005
- All 50 states and Washington, DC currently participate



# SOAR Process vs. Business as Usual

- SOAR focuses on the initial application
  - “Getting it Right the First Time”
  - 82% of NC SOAR cases are initial applications
- SOAR Case Workers take on the role of SSA 1696 Representative
- SOAR Case Workers gather medical records and interview applicant before submitting the application to SSA
- SOAR Case Workers write a Medical Summary Report



# NCCEH's role

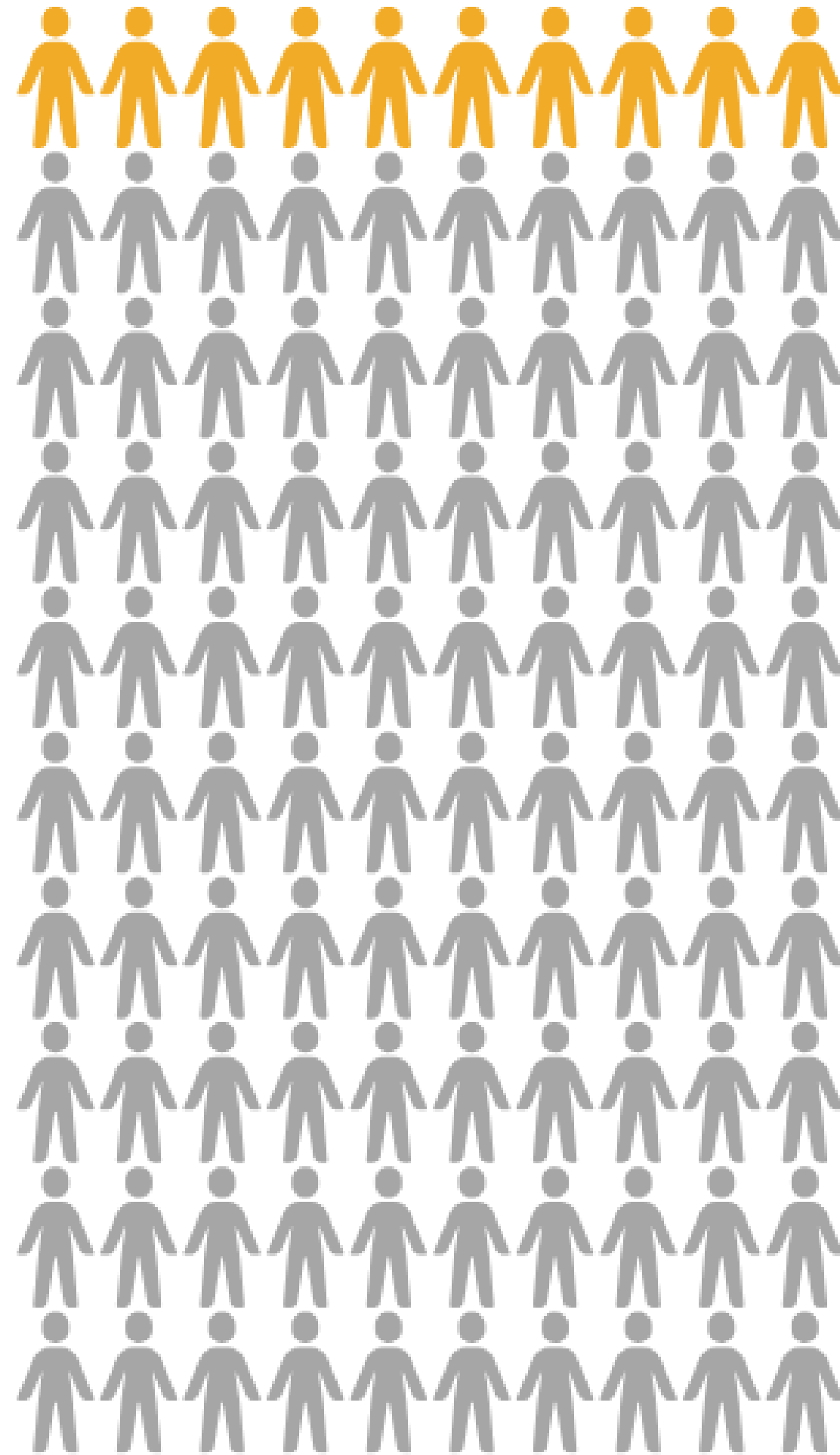
- As the state lead for NC SOAR, NCCEH provides training and ongoing technical assistance to caseworkers, agencies, and communities who use SOAR or are interested in incorporating SOAR
- NCCEH advocates for systemic changes with agencies like SSA and DDS to support SOAR casework being done in the state
- NCCEH provides a variety of resources for SOAR caseworkers and communities including:
  - Community SOAR Outcome Reports
  - SOAR Caseworker & Community Certification
  - Monthly SOAR Dialogue Group meetings

To find out more about these resources, please visit:  
<http://www.ncceh.org/ncsoar/>



# What's the difference?

Approval rates for first-time applications among adults experiencing homelessness can be as low as 10%



Comparatively, the approval rate for first-time applications using the SOAR model is 73%



# Best practices - Communication

- Apply for an “Obama-phone”
- Ask if they have a person they spend a lot of time with that you can call instead
- Do they frequent a business that they have a good relationship with that I could call?
- When appropriate for the role, asking about locations they frequent that would be okay to try and find them at. If not appropriate for the role, seeing if the client is connected to other service providers who can do that kind of outreach and can pass along messages
- If they have a place they get mail, send written messages
- Email addresses are super helpful even if they’re only somewhere they can check emails once in a blue moon
- Check if they have any type of routine or expectation of when they usually have Wi-Fi.
- Make sure they always have a business card or something with your info on it so they can get in touch if/when they need to

# Navigator Highlight

Juanita Thomas



# Applying for Medicaid

Gina Hamilton,

Associate Director,  
Policy/County Operations,  
Eligibility Services



## Applying for Medicaid without an Address

### **An individual may apply for Medicaid in-person, over the phone, online, or using a paper application**

- In-person applications will be taken at ANY local Department of Social Services, regardless where the applicant resides. A complete Medicaid application (including signature) can also be taken over-the-phone.
  - To find a local DSS office visit <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/localDSS>
- Individuals may apply online using ePASS or HealthCare.gov
  - To apply on ePASS, individuals must have an NCID. Obtaining an NCID requires an email address. For assistance applying online, the following resources are available:
    - NC Navigator Consortium: <https://ncnavigator.org/>
    - NC Medicaid Ambassadors: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/nc-medicaid-ambassador-initiative>
- Paper applications can be mailed, faxed, emailed, or dropped off at the local DSS office.
  - You can find a copy of the paper application at <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/apply>
  - Copies of applications in additional languages can be found at <https://epass.nc.gov/> under “Apply in other languages.”
- Individuals may also designate someone to apply on their behalf as an Authorized Representative.
  - More details on applying on behalf of someone else can be found here: <https://epass.nc.gov/login>

### **No physical address?**

- You do not need a physical address to apply for Medicaid. However, you must confirm you are physically in North Carolina and plan to live here. You do not need to plan to stay permanently and do not need to have a fixed address.
  - A person with no fixed or permanent address is a resident of the county where he/she states their intent to remain. If the individual is incapable of stating his intent to remain, he is a resident in the county in which he/she is found.
- Unhoused individuals may provide an address where they can pick up mail. If they do not have an address where they can pick up mail, they can use the local DSS address as their mailing address.
  - If applying on ePASS, individuals may select the county in which they reside and the DSS address in that county will be automatically populated.
  - Note: Important information and documents, such as eligibility notices and Medicaid ID cards will be sent to the address provided.

### What if an individual cannot pay their Medicaid co-pay?

Per NC policy **MA 2905.II.E:**

- Providers cannot deny services to any Medicaid patient because of the individual's inability to pay a deductible, coinsurance, or co-payment amount. An individual's inability to pay shall not eliminate his liability for the cost sharing charge. The provider may open an account for the patient and collect the amount owed at a later date.

# NC MEDICAID FOR MORE PEOPLE

Learn more at [Medicaid.nc.gov](https://www.Medicaid.nc.gov)



# Questions?

# Resources

Provides free, confidential and unbiased support and education about the rights and responsibilities people have under NC Medicaid Managed Care.

NC Medicaid  
Ombudsman

- Can assist in changing a beneficiary's Primary Care Provider or Managed Care Plan
- Can contact them via phone or online chat

NC Medicaid  
Enrollment Broker

- Review data based on county, age, sex, and race.
- Updated monthly!

Medicaid Expansion  
Dashboard

# Upcoming Opportunities

Join us for our May Medicaid Expansion Partner Engagement Sessions

- Enrollment Assister Partner Engagement Session on Wednesday, May 1st at 2pm: [Register Here](#)
- Community Outreach Partner Engagement Session on Thursday, May 2nd at 10:30am: [Register Here](#)

Beyond the Basics Webinar: Non-Magi Medicaid Eligibility on Tuesday, April 16th at 2pm: [Register Here](#)

## CONNECT WITH US



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**THANK  
YOU!**

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