



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

DATE: April 6, 2026
TO: Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Directors
FROM: Meghan E. Groen, Chief Deputy Director, Health Services
SUBJECT: Approved Unmet Needs Operating Standard

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Meghan E. Groen'.

TRANSMITTAL LETTER #2026-527

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports (ACLS Bureau), State Unit on Aging (SUA), is issuing this Transmittal Letter to provide guidance regarding the attached D-1 Unmet Needs in the *Operating Standards for Service Programs*. The Commission on Services to the Aging approved this standard on March 20, 2026. This standard is available for use in Area Plans beginning in fiscal year 2027, and will replace any Regional Service Definitions for gap-filling.

Please direct any questions to your assigned Regional Aging Representative.

MEG:jh

Attachment

c: AAA Planners & Contract Managers
Scott Wamsley, Director, ACLS Bureau
State Unit on Aging staff

Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports
OPERATING STANDARDS FOR SERVICE PROGRAMS

Service Name	Unmet Needs
Service Number	D-1
Service Category	To Be Determined by State Unit on Aging
Service Definition	Unmet Needs shall be short-term, limited, or intermittent supports provided on an as-needed basis when no other public or private resources are available, accessible, or appropriate. These services are not intended to be ongoing, to replace existing supports, or to duplicate other services, and are provided as a payer of last resort.
Unit of Service	To Be Determined by State Unit on Aging

Minimum Standards

1. Unmet Needs shall not duplicate existing services in an area plan.
2. Unmet Needs shall not be used for program development.
3. Unmet Needs shall be the least costly alternative that reasonably meets the individual's identified needs while remaining person-centered. These services are expressly designed to support an individual's ability to remain in a home or community setting.
4. Unmet Needs shall not already be covered under Medicare, Medicaid, state assistance programs or third-party payer. The provider must explore all alternative options before leveraging the Unmet Needs service.
5. An AAA with Unmet Needs as an approved service in the Area Plan shall notify the SUA after the service is provided to identify the most appropriate fund source and reporting category.
6. Payments made directly to clients/program participants are not permitted. Reimbursement for allowable expenses may be made with proof of purchase.
7. Unmet Needs for caregivers may be addressed using the Caregiver Supplemental Service.