

Bulletin

February 21, 2014

Minnesota Department of Human Services -- P.O. Box 64941 -- St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

OF INTEREST TO

- County Directors
- Financial Assistance Supervisors and Staff
- Social Services Supervisors and Staff
- Mille Lacs Tribal TANF
- Tribal Social Service Directors and Staff
- MinnesotaCare Operations Managers, Supervisors and Staff
- Community-based Youth Serving Agency Directors

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read and implement upon receipt.

EXPIRATION DATE

February 21, 2016.

Affordable Care Act Extension of Medical Assistance Benefits for Former Foster Care Youth

TOPIC

The Affordable Care Act extends Medical Assistance benefits to youth leaving foster care on or after their 18th birthday, to age 26.

PURPOSE

Provide policy and guidance for the extension of Medical Assistance benefits for former foster care youth.

CONTACT

MinnesotaCare Operations, counties and tribal agencies should submit policy questions to HealthQuest.

All others should direct questions to:

Health Care Eligibility and Access (HCEA) Division
P.O. Box 64989
540 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55164-0989

Child Safety and Permanency Division
Adolescent Services Unit: Mary Doyle, 651-431-4685
Fax, 651-431-7522 mary.doyle@state.mn.us

SIGNED

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Assistant Commissioner	Acting Assistant Commissioner
Children and Family Services	Health Care Administration

Terminology Disclaimer

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

I. Overview

This bulletin provides information regarding the new former foster child category of the Affordable Care Act. This category extends Medical Assistance (MA) eligibility for youth leaving foster care at age 18 or older to age 26. This eligibility is effective January 1, 2014.

II. Background

Children in foster care have unique health care needs, as this population has high occurrences of chronic medical conditions and mental health needs. These needs may be attributed, in part, to the high occurrence of trauma in this group. "Adverse Childhood Experiences in Minnesota, Findings and Recommendations Based on the 2011 Minnesota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System," cites that, "An extensive and growing body of research documents that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) -- those causing toxic levels of stress or trauma before age 18 -- are specifically linked to poor physical and mental health, chronic disease, etc." Specifically, The Congressional Research Services reports that between 35 to 60 percent of youth entering foster care have at least one chronic or acute medical condition that requires treatment and 50 to 75 percent of foster youth exhibit behavioral or social competency issues that may require mental health treatment.

Recognizing the health care needs of children in foster care, the Affordable Care Act extends Medical Assistance (MA) eligibility for youth leaving foster care at age 18 or older, to age 26. This new eligibility extension was created to seek parity with young adults who can remain on their parents' health insurance until age 26.

County, tribal and community-based agency staff need to inform youth about this extended health care benefit.

III. Introduction

To extend MA benefits for former foster care youth, the Affordable Care Act created a new MA eligibility category for this population effective January 1, 2014. Eligibility applies to those who were in foster care on or after their 18th birthday and on MA or MinnesotaCare, and who do not meet MA eligibility under another basis other than the new adults without children group. This new eligibility category extends coverage to both former Title IV-E and non Title IV-E children.

This bulletin provides policy and guidance for MA eligibility for former foster youth.

A. Medical Assistance for Former Foster Care Youth

1. Eligibility

To qualify for the new MA category an individual must meet the following criteria:

- Is under age 26
- Was in foster care in Minnesota
- Had foster care end at age 18 or older, and
- Was enrolled in MA or MinnesotaCare at the time foster care ended

Individuals who meet the criteria, and who are not otherwise eligible for MA as a child under age 21, a pregnant woman, a parent, or a person who receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and is blind or has a disability, qualify for MA as a former foster care youth through the month of their 26th birthday.

The former foster care category of MA includes individuals who turned 18, or aged out of foster care prior to January 1, 2014. For example, an applicant who is age 23 in January 2014, and who was receiving MA at the time they turned 18 (in 2009), may qualify for MA under the former foster care category.

The former foster care category of MA does not include individuals who were in foster care in another state, or whose foster care in Minnesota ended for reasons other than aging out at age 18 or older.

2. Verification of Foster Care Status

Eligibility for the MA category for former foster care youth is verified by self-attestation. Individuals are not required to provide proof that they were in foster care in Minnesota, or had MA or MinnesotaCare when their foster care ended.

3. Eligibility Begin Date

If retroactive eligibility is not requested, eligibility begins on either the first day of the month of application, or the date on which all eligibility factors are met, whichever is later. If retroactive eligibility is requested, the earliest possible date on which eligibility can begin is the first day of the month that is three months prior to the month of application. Individuals must meet all eligibility factors in each of the retroactive months.

4. Renewals

Individuals enrolled in MA for former foster care youth follow the same renewal process used by other MA enrollees whose eligibility was determined through the MNsure health insurance marketplace. More information on the renewal process will be provided as it becomes available.

5. Social Security Number

Individuals must provide a Social Security number when they apply, unless they meet an established exception. Refer to Minnesota Health Care Programs Manual (HCPM) [Chapter 10](#) – Social Security Number and Insurance Affordability Programs Manual (IAPM) Section 300.10.05.10 -- Social Security Number for Families With Children and Adults for the list of established exceptions to the Social Security number requirement.

6. Citizenship/Immigration Status

Follow standard MA guidelines regarding citizenship and immigration status, including verification guidelines.

7. Residency

Individuals must be Minnesota residents to be eligible under this category. Follow standard MA residency guidelines.

8. Insurance and Benefit Recovery

Follow standard MA guidelines. Refer to HCPM [Chapter 15](#) – Third Party Liability (TPL), [Section 15.10.05](#) – Cost Effective Health Care Coverage – MA, and [Section 19.50](#) – Liens and Estate Recovery, for more information.

9. Household Composition

Since eligibility is determined without regard to income, household composition is not a factor for this category.

10. Income Guidelines

Eligibility is determined without regard to income for this category.

11. Spenddown Eligibility

Spenddowns are not considered under this category because income is not an eligibility factor.

12. Asset Guidelines

Eligibility is determined without regard to assets for this category.

13. Covered Services

Individuals are eligible for all MA covered services. Prior authorization may be required for certain services.

14. Service Delivery

Individuals eligible under this category are required to enroll in a managed care health plan to receive services, unless they meet an exclusion from enrollment. Refer to Prepaid Minnesota Health Care Programs Manual – [Education and Enrollment: PMAP Excluded Populations](#) for a list of excluded populations. Services for non-excluded individuals are provided on a fee-for-service basis until they are enrolled in a managed care health plan.

15. End of Eligibility Category

Individuals who turn age 26 are no longer eligible for this category.

16. Relationship to Other Eligibility Categories

To qualify for MA for former foster care youth, an individual must be ineligible for MA under a mandatory category, including MA for children under age 21, parents, pregnant women and MA for people who are blind or have disabilities and receive SSI. Individuals who qualify for MA under one of these categories may qualify for MA as a former foster care youth if eligibility ends under the mandatory category prior to the individual turning age 26.

17. Child and Teen Checkup Coverage

Individuals under age 21 who are eligible for MA under this new category are covered for Child and Teen Checkup services. Individuals ages 21-25 who are eligible under this new MA eligibility category are not covered for Child and Teen Checkup services.

B. Application Process for Former Foster Care Youth

Individuals who are interested in applying for MA for former foster care youth should be directed to the MNsure website at: <http://www.mnsure.org/>.

Individuals do not need to apply specifically for this MA eligibility category. They apply for help paying health care costs, and the system determines whether they qualify for MA under the former foster care category or another category of MA, MinnesotaCare, or enrollment in a Qualified Health Plan with or without Advanced Premium Tax Credit. Individuals must create an account to apply online.

The online application for help paying health care costs includes a series of questions designed to identify applicants who qualify for MA as former foster care youth:

- a. Were you ever in foster care in Minnesota? (If yes, question b appears)
- b. Did foster care stop when you were age 18 or older? (If yes, question c appears)
- c. Were you on Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare at the time foster care ended?

IV. Legal Citations

Minnesota Statutes, section 256B.055, subdivision 17
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Public Law 111-148, section 2004

V. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-2283 (voice) or toll free at (888) 938-3224 or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.