



MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-10

Date: April 27, 2020

To: Eligibility Services Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Regional Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2115

Subject: COVID-19 Policy Updates #7

The information in this bulletin provides temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing applications and redeterminations during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins) at <http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins>;
- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins>.

COVID-19 Policy Updates #7

Background

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. On the same date, President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency. Guidance from state and federal leaders emphasize the need for social distancing and limiting contact with others during this time. In light of this guidance, HHSC is temporarily modifying its current eligibility policies to accommodate processing of applications and renewals.

1. Extending Children's Health Insurance Program(CHIP) & CHIP Perinatal(CHIP-P) Coverage

COVID-19 Policy

CHIP, CHIP-P

On April 13, 2020, HHSC received federal approval to extend CHIP and CHIP-P certification periods ending in April 2020 for three additional months.

Households with certification periods ending April 2020 were automatically extended until July 2020.

Staff Procedures

State office is working with IT to close out TLM tasks for CHIP and CHIP-P programs that have been extended. If staff receive a renewal task for a program that has already been extended, follow the process below:

Staff must process renewal tasks as 'filed in error' when benefits have extended due to COVID-19 and a household:

- Submits/Submitted a renewal form before their new renewal due date and the task is waiting to be processed; or
- Submitted a renewal form that is currently pending for missing information.

For renewal tasks that meet the 'filed in error' criteria as stated above, staff must mark the task in EWMS as No Action Taken - 'Certification Extension' and update the TLM task accordingly.

As a reminder, staff must continue to dispose any case actions that result in a denial for active CHIP and CHIP-P EDGs.

Automation

TIERS automatically extended CHIP and CHIP-P benefits with certification periods ending in April 2020.

Correspondence

Form H1809, Notice of Health Care Benefits Extension, was sent to households with information about the extension for CHIP and CHIP-P certification periods ending in April 2020.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

2. Processing Medicaid Applications for Children Who Were Previously in the Conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

COVID-19 Policy

[Foster Care Medicaid and Texas Works Medicaid](#)

HR 6201 (Families First Coronavirus Response Act), requires states to maintain Medicaid coverage for most people active or certified for Medicaid as of or after March 18, 2020 until the end of the public health emergency period. As of March 18, 2020, Medicaid cannot be denied unless the person:

- Voluntarily withdraws;
- Dies; or
- Moves out of state.

Recipients can be transferred to another appropriate type of assistance when a change occurs, if the new type of assistance has the same or better coverage as the original Medicaid type of assistance. Otherwise, the recipient must stay on the existing Medicaid type of assistance until the end of the public health emergency period.

Children who are in the conservatorship of DFPS receive Foster Care Medicaid. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, these children will continue to

receive Foster Care Medicaid after they have left the conservatorship of DFPS if they do not qualify for another Medicaid type of assistance.

Staff Procedures

At disposition, TIERS will automatically deny an application for Children's Medicaid if the child is currently receiving Foster Care Medicaid. If a household is applying for Medicaid for a child who has recently left the conservatorship of DFPS but is currently receiving Foster Care Medicaid, staff must process the application and determine if the child meets all the eligibility criteria for Children's Medicaid.

To be eligible for Children's Medicaid a child must:

- Be under age 19;
- Be a U.S. citizen or have a qualifying immigration status;
- Have household income at or below the income threshold for the type of assistance;
- Be a Texas resident; and
- Meet all other eligibility requirements for Medicaid.

If the child is eligible for Children's Medicaid, staff must open a ticket with the Help Desk to process a PSR to deny the Foster Care Medicaid so TIERS will certify the child for Children's Medicaid. It is critical that staff ensure the child is eligible for Children's Medicaid before staff open a ticket to deny the Foster Care Medicaid.

If the child is not eligible for Children's Medicaid, at disposition, TIERS will correctly deny the application and maintain the child's enrollment in Foster Care Medicaid. Staff do not need to take any further action.

Automation

There are no automation changes.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

3. Addressing DFPS TOAs with Cash Assistance and Other Legally Obligated Income for Children

COVID-19 Policy

All Programs

Children who are in the conservatorship of DFPS receive Foster Care Medicaid. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, these children will continue to receive Foster Care Medicaid after they have left the conservatorship of DFPS if they do not qualify for another Medicaid type of assistance.

Although a child's Medicaid coverage is maintained through the end of the public health emergency, the DFPS cash assistance provided with DFPS Medicaid TOAs (Foster Care (FC), Adoption Assistance (AA), and Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Medicaid) is not extended. To accurately determine household income when a child formerly in the conservatorship of DFPS returns home, staff must verify that the cash assistance associated with DFPS Medicaid has ended (TWH A-1324.1, Adoption Assistance and TWH A-1326.4, Foster Care and Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Payments).

Additionally, when a child is no longer in the conservatorship of DFPS, staff must continue to address any income legally obligated to the child and available to the household that may have been diverted to DFPS while the child was in DFPS conservatorship. (TWH A-1326.15, Income Legally Obligated to Children in Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Conservatorship).

To obtain verification that DFPS cash assistance is no longer being provided, when a child receiving Foster Care Medicaid returns to their home, staff must send an email to the DFPS FC-ADO Mailbox, fcadomedex@dfps.state.tx.us with the following information:

Subject title: Verify Cash Assistance TOA status

Body of email:

Name of child: Medicaid #:

<Name> has informed us that their child has returned home. Please confirm the date when the child was returned home and if they are receiving cash benefits. If they are not currently receiving cash benefits, please confirm the date the cash benefits ended.

Automation

There are no automation changes.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

4. Update: Processing Case Actions for Medicaid Programs

COVID-19 Policy Clarification

Medical Programs

The MEPD and TW Bulletin #20-04 (COVID-19 Policy Updates #1, Item #6) issued on March 23, 2020, instructed staff to not dispose any case actions that would result in a denial for active Medicaid EDGs. This update provides additional guidance on how to process case actions for Medicaid programs.

Staff must complete the following steps when processing case actions for active Medicaid EDGs.

- Run EDBC.
- Do not dispose Medicaid EDGs that TIERS shows as terminated.
- Dispose all other non-Medicaid EDGs.
 - TIERS will not move the case to Ongoing mode because Medicaid has not been disposed.
- Document the following in case comments: "Worker sustained Medicaid EDG XXXX due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Case mode can be changed to 'Ongoing Mode'."
 - TIERS will use the case comment to run a nightly PSR to move the case to Ongoing mode.
- Set the task(s) for the Medicaid EDG to *Suspend – Other* in EWMS.

Automation

Automation changes to maintain Medicaid without having to suspend EDGs are still in development. Staff should continue to suspend any Medicaid EDGs in EWMS that are set to deny. More information about how to process the suspended EDGs will be provided at a later date.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.