



MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-21

Date: September 30, 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: **Revised - COVID Policy Updates #15**

The information in this bulletin provides temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications should no longer be used for processing case actions and determining eligibility. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [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>;
- [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>.

COVID Policy Updates #15

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 providing the following policy clarifications and temporary changes to eligibility policies to accommodate processing of case actions during this emergency period.

1. Processing Redeterminations While Maintaining Continuous Medicaid Coverage (September 2020 and ongoing months)

Clarification: This bulletin has been updated to include additional instructions for processing Medicaid renewals during the public health emergency.

COVID-19 Policy

Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities, Texas Works Medicaid, Healthy Texas Women

Although H.R. 6201 (Families First Coronavirus Response Act), requires HHSC to maintain Medicaid coverage through the end of the public health emergency, the federal requirement to conduct a Medicaid eligibility determination once every 12 months has not been waived.

Staff must resume processing renewals for Medicaid. As a reminder, Medicaid eligibility can only be terminated during the public health emergency period at renewal if the person has died, voluntarily withdrawn from Medicaid, or moved out of state. EDGs that are terminated for any other reason at renewal must be maintained until the end of public health emergency period.

TIERS will renew the following EDGs for a six-month period instead of 12-months to ensure eligibility remains active during the public health emergency period:

- EDGs determined ineligible when processing a renewal;
- EDGs in renewal status but a renewal packet is not returned; and
- EDGs renewed with unverified eligibility criteria (i.e. the household fails to provide missing information).

Note: TIERS will extend the certification period for one additional month if the renewal was initiated before cut-off but not completed at cut-off. The extra month

ensures individuals do not lose their Medicaid eligibility while staff complete the renewal process. Staff must attempt to complete all renewals timely.

Staff Procedures

Except for pending for verification, process renewals due in September 2020 and the following months using normal policy and procedures. Due to the requirement to maintain Medicaid eligibility during the public health emergency, TIERS will not automatically pend Medicaid EDGs. Staff must use manual correspondence to request required verification.

Generating Manual Form H1020

TIERS has rules to prevent staff from pending for verification and TIERS will not automatically generate a Form H1020, Request for Information or Action, during the public health emergency.

Staff must review the appropriate LUWs to determine if additional information is needed to complete the person's renewal. When additional information is needed to determine eligibility, follow the instructions below to create a manual Form H1020:

1. Navigate to Generate Manual Correspondence in TIERS.
2. Search for the case or application that needs a Form H1020.
3. Select the appropriate Head of Household and EDG.
4. After the appropriate EDG is selected, on the **Search Document Information** screen, select **Notice** for Document Type and enter **1020** for Document Name. Click Search.

The screenshot shows the 'Search Document Information' interface. At the top right are three buttons: 'Previous', 'Reset', and 'Search'. Below these is a 'Document Search' header. The 'Document Type' is set to 'Notice' in a dropdown menu, and the 'Document Name' is '1020'. Another set of 'Previous', 'Reset', and 'Search' buttons is located below the search fields. Under the 'Search Results' section, a single result is displayed: '1020-Request For Information or Action' with a blue underlined link.

5. Select the 1020 link.
 - a. Select "Other – see comments below" in the "We have not completed your case because" drop-down menu.
 - b. Input the due date in the "We will complete your case by" field according to policy.

- c. Specify the additional information needed from the household in the "Other Comments" field.

- 6. Enter case comments and include:

"Case has been manually pended following COVID Policy Bulletin 20-21. Verification Due Date XXX".

- 7. Preview the form to ensure it has the correct information.
- 8. Click the Generate Form button.
- 9. Navigate to **View History Correspondence** page.
- 10. In the "Print Begin Date" field, enter the current date. Select the radio button next to the H1020 you are generating; click "Next."

Select	Correspondence ID	Document Description	Print Date	Print Type	Print Mode
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	3448056117748	1020-Request For Information or Action	09/17/2020	Original	Online
<input type="radio"/>	3448056117735	1020-Request For Information or Action	09/17/2020	Original	Online

11. On **History Correspondence Detail** page, click "Reprint Later."

History Correspondence Detail						
ID Type:	Case	Date Requested:	09/17/2020			
Case or Application #:	100000025	User ID:	user3000			
Print Mode:	Online	Print Type:	Original			
Recipients:	Ms. Mara Caro					

12. Navigate to **View Pending Correspondence**.

- a. Confirm the form is listed with the current date as the "Request Date" and the "Generate Date." This ensures the form will go out in the nightly batch.
 - i. If the dates do not reflect the current date, return to Step 1 above and follow the steps to generate the form again.

Note: If the steps above do not generate Form H1020 with the current date after the second attempt, report this issue to the IEE Help Desk.
- b. Once you can complete Steps 1 - 12 successfully (verifying that the dates in **History Correspondence Detail** are correct and current), continue to Step 13 below.



13. On the Redetermination TLM task, click the Check Mark.

14. Select "MI Requested" on the Action drop-down menu and click Done.



15. Record the outcome as "Pend" in EWMS.

If the household does not return the requested verification, deny the EDG for failure to provide. TIERS will revert the EDG back to active status when it is disposed and will issue a new six-month certification period.

TIERS will issue a 6-month certification period when the EDG is disposed and required verification fields in TIERS LUWs are set to *Not Verified* or the verification date is older than 60 days.

TIERS will issue a full 12-month certification period when the Medicaid EDG is disposed and staff reviewed and updated the required verifications fields in TIERS LUWs to process the renewal.

Automation

Changes to TIERS have been implemented with TIERS Release 107.3 on September 19, 2020.

Correspondence

When the person is determined ineligible, TIERS will send Form TF0001, *Notice of Case Action*, to notify the person that their Medicaid is approved for a six-month period and their eligibility may end when the COVID-19 public health emergency ends.

When the person is determined eligible, TIERS will send Form TF0001 to notify the person that their Medicaid is approved with a 12-month certification period.

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. Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement

COVID-19 Policy Information

SNAP

HHSC has been granted approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue September 2020 emergency allotment (EA) supplements to participating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) households. Households who are approved for SNAP in September 2020 will automatically be issued supplements that will bring the household up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size.

All EA supplements will be automatically issued on the SNAP household's existing EBT card. SNAP households do not need to take any action to receive EA supplements.

Note: SNAP households that already receive the maximum monthly allotment for their household size are not eligible for EA supplements.

Starting September 7, 2020, EA supplements for September will be issued on a randomized staggered schedule. The issuance of September EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be completed by September 11, 2020. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after September 11, 2020, including households who receive a prorated allotment, will be issued their supplement by the end of September.

TIERS will add the following case comment "COVID-19 SNAP supplements issued" for a case where the EA supplement was issued. HHSC will not be sending a notice to households regarding the EA supplement.

Additionally, Quality Control and other case reading reviews are continuing during the pandemic to ensure accuracy. Although SNAP households will receive the maximum allotment, staff must still ensure regular monthly benefits are calculated correctly when processing any case actions.

Automation

September EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be issued between September 7, 2020, and September 11, 2020. Any newly certified SNAP households will be issued EA supplements before the end of September.

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.