

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
National Stakeholder Call-
Medicaid and CHIP Renewals: Important Updates and Call to Action
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Eden Tesfaye: Hi everybody. We will give folks a couple of minutes to join here. Thank you so much for joining everybody. Alright while we are having folks join us here, I will go ahead and get started. Thank you guys again for taking the time to join. My name is Eden Tesfaye and I'm an Advisor for External Affairs to the Administrator here at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. So, today's call, we are going to be talking about the recently released guidance and fact sheet and all the materials around Medicaid Unwinding. As I'm sure you've heard, on Monday, the U.S. Department of Health and CMS released a series of resources, as I just mentioned, on keeping people covered as states return to routine Medicaid renewals for both Medicaid and CHIP. As pandemic-era protections for Medicaid coverage end, states across the country are resuming their regular processes for renewing individuals' Medicaid coverage.

The Biden-Harris Administration continues to be deeply concerned about eligible people losing health care coverage during Medicaid renewals and will do everything in our power to keep Americans enrolled in comprehensive health care coverage, whether that's coverage through Medicaid, CHIP, or Marketplace. But we need your help as we continue to work collaboratively with states, advocates, private sector partners, the health care industry, and folks across the board to achieve this goal. We'll also continue our outreach and engagement efforts, such as targeted paid media and other earned media campaigns, letters to Governors, other state and local officials, and the use of the [Medicaid.gov/renewals](https://www.medicaid.gov/renewals) page.

Today you will hear from CMS leadership about the new releases and what partners, like you all, can do to help people stay covered. The main purpose of today's webinar is our urgent call to action for all of you joining us today. We ask that you use the information presented today to help us ensure that people on Medicaid and CHIP continue with health care coverage. We need every one of you to help with outreach and education, with your networks, members, communities, and other stakeholders alike.

Everyone should be able to see today's agenda on their screen. First on the agenda, you will hear from Senior Counselor to the Secretary, Rachel Pryor, followed by hearing from Deputy Administrator and Director for the Centers for Medicaid and CHIP Services, Dan Tsai. Then, we will walk-through the materials that CMS released earlier this week, and the CMS Office of Communications will also review some updates to the [Medicaid.gov/Unwinding](https://www.medicaid.gov/Unwinding) webpage before we close the call today.

Now before I pass it over to our speakers, I wanted to share a few housekeeping items. As a reminder, this webinar is being recorded. Also, while members of the press are always welcome to attend the call, please note that all press or media questions should be submitted using our Media Inquiries Form, which may be found at cms.gov/newsroom/media-inquiries, and we will be sure to put that link into the chat. All participants are muted. There's closed captioning available via the link shared in the chat by our Zoom moderator. Now, with that, I would like to turn it over to Rachel Pryor, Senior Counselor for Health Policy for Secretary Xavier Becerra, here at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Rachel will walk through the pieces that HHS released earlier this week. With that, turning it over to you, Rachel.

Rachel Pryor: Thank you so much, Eden. Hopefully everyone can hear me. I was a late addition to our webinar today so I'm mid-transit, but very, very, very happy to be here with you all today. The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to ensuring that every American has access to high-quality health coverage and, as Eden noted, we want to make sure that people stay covered whether that's Medicaid, Medicare, Obamacare, or employer-sponsored coverage. The goal is that no one loses coverage that they are eligible for simply because of red tape or confusion about these renewals.

Now, every year, I think as a lot of the folks on the phone know, we do annual Medicaid redeterminations. Those were paused during COVID, and we have all been all-hands-on-deck as we have resumed those annual redeterminations, particularly for folks that haven't historically done a renewal, particularly if they came on in Medicaid in the last three years. As Secretary Becerra said on Monday in his letter to all Governors, nobody who is eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program should lose coverage simply because they changed addresses, didn't receive a form, or didn't have enough information about the renewal process.

In March, Secretary Becerra issued a letter to states reminding them of their obligations and pushing them to adopt the flexibilities that CMS had laid out, and he followed that March letter with his letter on Monday by announcing new flexibilities including allowing for managed care plans to fill out renewal forms, having presumptive eligibility in pharmacies, and giving beneficiaries more time to complete their renewal form. In addition to pushing flexibilities for the new flexibilities, I want to be clear that Secretary Becerra has made it clear to all states that he will not hesitate to use the compliance tools in his toolbox to make sure that our states are doing what they need to do and protecting our beneficiaries' rights to due process.

We do take our oversight responsibilities very seriously here. I'm going to end by saying that we are asking all-hands-on-deck. We are begging you to join us to keep every Medicaid beneficiary covered in whatever coverage is the right coverage for them. We know that there's so much that we can do, and we are ready to partner with you to do it. And with that, I will hand it over to Dan Tsai, my colleague who runs Medicaid.

Dan Tsai: Thanks, Rachel. Thanks for those remarks and thank you for all joining and your engagement on this. As Rachel mentioned, we are really elevating an urgent call to action across the board for our state partners and everybody else.

So just a little bit of context on the different pieces that were released and what we are seeing. So as, hopefully you all know, Medicaid renewals and the regular process of checking Medicaid eligibility based on federal rules were paused during the course of the pandemic. All of that has restarted across the country. It is worth acknowledging that for the past two years we from a federal standpoint in the Administration have been working intensely with our state partners, with everyone across the community, to prepare for this moment and it is important to note people have done a lot and our state partners have done a lot.

At the same time, as we start to see the data that has been coming in for our experience across the country, we are worried because we are seeing high rates of terminations, meaning people -- Medicaid enrollees losing coverage, and the most concerning part is the vast majority of those people losing coverage are not losing coverage because a state has been able to affirmatively confirm that that individual is, say, over income. Most of the closings, the disenrollments from Medicaid are for procedural reasons and largely for folks not responding to the renewals. That coupled with what we know from survey data, from individual interviews, and focus groups on the ground, its clear that many people do not know that the Medicaid renewal process has started for the past three years. Many of our enrollees have been told by a range of folks, "Hey, your coverage is protected, which is important and great. Don't worry about that renewal form." That has all changed and that level of awareness we are seeing is very low and therefore we are highly concerned as an Administration that you have eligible people, eligible kids, eligible families, eligible individuals losing their Medicaid coverage not because they are no longer eligible but because they have not made it through some of the administrative processes and red tape, or do not have awareness of what's happening.

So that is an important piece to note and we have been saying it. It is not an exaggeration to say that for millions of Americans, their healthcare coverage is at risk. We are committed to keeping people covered. We want people covered whether that's through Medicaid if they're eligible, or, as Rachel said, a range of other coverage options.

So, on the call to action, these were outlined in the Secretary's Letter to Governors, the fact sheet we put out, and additional policy details that we put out over the past several days. The first piece is really urging our state partners to do several things. One, don't rush it. Take it slow. Take the full 12 months. We have been encouraging that for the past year and a half. We believe that's really important. Rushing it will lead to overburdening a state's operational capacity to respond to calls, to service people, to help people navigate through the Medicaid renewal process. We have been asking states also to take up many of the waivers and strategies we put on the table over the past year and a half that really make the renewal process easier and make it easier for folks to keep coverage without even having to chase a piece of paper in the mail. We've approved almost 250 waivers across the country, but that really does vary by state. So, we are urging all the states to take up every one of those options that we know will help keep eligible people covered.

We are also asking states to partner even more aggressively with managed care entities and others to help get the word out and to adopt a range of new strategies we just put out on Monday that will help to reduce procedural terminations or help get people reenrolled more quickly. We are also, in parallel, in addition to what we are asking states to do there, we would just

underscore we are aggressively and robustly monitoring what's happening in each state. We have appreciated states being very collaborative in sharing what is happening and in problem-solving together. We are acting swiftly to make sure that all the federal rules for Medicaid renewals and such are being followed. We will use and we won't hesitate to use every single lever that Congress has given us in order to make sure that eligible people really keep their coverage in Medicaid or can successfully make it over to other forms of coverage. So, we can talk more about that in a little bit.

Also, one last piece before turning it to Perrie to walk through some of the materials that we put out, we really are asking for a Call to Action across our partners. Whether you're in the health care space as a provider or an advocate or a community-based organization or a health plan, or you're in the broader community and serve folks through a range of things or are a part of the faith-based community, or civil rights community, each of you all have a really important role in helping to make sure that individuals and families enrolled in the program know what's happening from a trusted resource, can really get mobilized on the ground, local and specific to communities and individual states and also, we are asking for your help in helping to assist people and get through the process of Medicaid renewal. So those are very high-level pieces. We have many other details underneath what the call to action is, what we've really been partnering and urging and asking the states to do more all with the purpose of making sure that we keep people connected to health care coverage, we don't have people who are eligible for coverage uninsured, and we help people navigate through this process. So that is our priority and focus and that's the most important thing we've got going on right now. So, Perrie, I'm going to turn it to you, to walk through a little bit more of what was released, and I think we're doing Q&A from folks.

Perrie Briskin: Thanks, Dan. Hi, everyone. So, we, as Eden mentioned, released a series of materials on Monday. The first was a Secretary Letter to Governors where we call on states and the Secretary calls on states to do even more, and our partners to do even more, to help keep people covered. So, the Secretary urged states to work with local governments, community-based organizations, schools, faith-based organizations, grocery stores, pharmacies, and anyone else in your communities who can help people understand the Medicaid and CHIP eligibility and renewal process.

The second thing we released was a CMS Fact Sheet and, also, a CMS Call to Action Sheet. The Fact Sheet gives the current state of unwinding, where we are, why we are here, to help give some background on what is going on and why we need your help. The Call to Action Sheet is a sheet that tells you, from us, what we would like you to be doing in your communities and what we are calling on states to do, what we're calling on partners to do, health plans to do. There's a rule for nearly everyone and so, we urge you to take that call to action and review it and see what more can you be doing to help people stay covered.

For states, we also released a table of strategies to prevent what we call procedural terminations, terminations due to red tape or people not returning their forms. And in that table, it lists current flexibilities states can take up but also some new flexibilities that we are really excited about. For instance, giving managed care plans the opportunity to help people even more directly by

filling out a good portion of their forms and so basically enabling other organizations to help people directly with getting signed up and renewing their coverage.

We also posted, just yesterday, an updated list to our website of what we call (e)(14), what state flexibility states have taken up. These are strategies and flexibilities states can take up for the unwinding period to make it even easier for people to stay covered. And we are seeing the more strategies that are taken up, the more chances that the process goes smoothly, and people keep their coverage. So that's one of the things the Secretary is urging, that's one of the things that CMS is urging is more states to take up as many of these flexibilities as possible and you can see on our website, by state, what flexibilities each state has taken up and if your state has not taken up flexibilities or has taken up a very low number of flexibilities, that is an example of one area where your state can do more.

So that is -- those are the materials and with that I think, am I turning it back over to Eden?

Jonathan Blonar: Hey, Perrie, it's Jonathan. I'm going to take it from here. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Jonathan Blonar and I'm the Deputy Group Director in the Partner Relations Group at CMS in the Office of Communications. What I would like to do is really walk through the unwinding web page in detail and make folks aware of all the various resources that we have out there that are available to our partners and stakeholders to help get the messaging out that we've talked so much about today. So I'm going to share my screen. Folks should be able to see it.

So, this is the main unwinding page if you go to [Medicaid.gov](https://www.Medicaid.gov) and go to unwinding, this is the main page. I want to first highlight these two new resources that are out here. The first document talks about what CMS is doing to help keep people covered, including what we have done as well. So, this is really an all-hands-on-deck approach as Dan and Perrie have spoken about today. This really goes through a lot about what Dan talked about, why are Medicaid renewals restarting across the country, why is this work challenging, how have we prepared to keep people covered and what we have learned so far. Dan talked a little bit about that as well.

The second document here is really our call to action. What we are asking partners and stakeholders to do to help spread the messaging on unwinding and it's what can you do as a partner or stakeholder to help spread the Medicaid unwinding messaging. There are four things right here that I want to highlight. It's one, making sure Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries are updating their contact information. Dan talked a lot about the procedural denials and making sure that folks have their contact information updated with their state. Responding to anything they get in the mail from Medicaid or CHIP, especially the renewal form, when it comes to their mailbox. Parents should respond as well even if they don't think they are eligible, their kids may still be eligible. And then, consider other coverage options whether it is employer healthcare, the Affordable Care Act that Eden mentioned earlier, which is the Marketplace, or through Medicare, and there's a special election period for Medicare as well. This document talks a little bit about what the private and public sector can do. It talks about what states can do, members of Congress and so on. Again, Dan talked a lot about that. So, two real good documents here to help folks.

Then if we come over to the left menu, there's a new link here. It is called Outreach and Educational Resources. So, if we go to that, I think this used to be called our Communication Toolkit page. We've really redesigned it and reorganized it to make it much more user friendly. At the top of the document here is the toolkit. It is available in English and Spanish, as well as some of the materials are available in five other languages as well. The toolkit really includes all the materials that partners can use to help spread messaging, but if we come down further, a lot of these are broken out individually down here and I will walk through them.

We have a new section on social media. So, this first one is for phase one of unwinding, which is really making sure Medicaid beneficiaries update their contact information. We have phase two messaging which is how to sign up for a new type of health insurance if you're no longer eligible for Medicaid, and then we have social media on fraud and scams. Each of these opens to a zip file and includes various graphics that you can use for social media, to print, to hang up in waiting rooms or lobbies, or anywhere else that will be good to hang them up. And then down here we have various accordions with plus signs that you can expand. The first one is helping people get ready to renew their coverage. If we expand it, there's general messaging. We have non-fillable flyers, we have post cards, we have tear off pads, and I will just open one of these as an example. So, this is an example of a flyer "Have you heard the news? Your state will restart eligibility reviews. Don't risk a gap in your coverage, get ready to renew now. Make sure contact information is up to date. Check your mail for a letter. Complete your renewal form." Then we also have fillable flyers as well so that different states can specify what they want in the flyer, so I will open this one as well. It is similar to the last one "Have you heard the news" and then you can type in here, for example, Maryland will start eligibility reviews and then you can put a website down here to the, for example, Maryland Medicaid site or a phone number as well. So, these are fillable. You can make them very specific to your state. I'm going to drop down and I'm going to close this.

I will drop down to helping people who have lost Medicaid or CHIP coverage. There's a Partner Tip Sheet and there's a Fact Sheet. I will open the Tip Sheet but these are really good information on directing people how to sign up for coverage if they've lost Medicaid eligibility. Again, update their contact information, if they got a letter about their coverage from their state health plan, what they need to do, and then telling them about other health care options such as employer sponsored or [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov).

There's a section helping people get ready to renew, helping people who have lost Medicaid or CHIP coverage, again, tip sheets, fact sheets, post cards. The resource for kids and families is an important one. About nearly half the kids in this country get their health coverage through Medicaid and about 5.3 million children are expected to lose coverage. So, real good information here for post cards for kids with Medicaid or CHIP. There's also a fillable post card for kids with Medicaid or CHIP as well so you can customize that one as well.

There's fraud and scam messaging. This is a document where you can customize if you're aware of certain scam alerts in your state. You can customize this language here. You know, you can include the state's name, committed to protecting you and your family from scams. Then you can fill in as necessary.

There's back to school messaging. There are educational videos. These are new. These are really great. They are 30 second, 15 second and 6 second video clips. You can share these with -- you can share them on Facebook, social media, Instagram, Twitter, you can play them in waiting rooms if you have the ability, if you have closed captioning TV in your facilities, you can play them on those. I do want to note that they can't be used for public service announcements, so I just want to flag that. But really good videos here on getting ready to renew as well as, you know, just three good videos here.

And then our partner education webinars which happen the last Wednesday of every month. Our next one is on June 28th. It's going to be a Train the Trainer webinar, so I highly encourage folks to register for that if you haven't. We are going to go through a slide presentation really training, you know, folks like you on the phone today on how to educate and get the word out there. You can click here to register for the upcoming webinars. We also have all of our previous webinars on our CMS National Stakeholder Calls page. You will be able to find today's webinar out there as well.

So, a lot of great information out here. I'm hoping we have reorganized it in a way that's really user friendly. A lot of generic material out there as well as customizable material as well. So, check it out and, you know, we have talked a lot about the call to action today and really helping get the word out about Medicaid Unwinding and these resources will definitely help you do that. So, with that I would like to turn it back to Dan. I know we have about two minutes left, and I will kick it back to Dan for any closing remarks.

Dan Tsai: Thanks, Jonathan. Just to emphasize how much we appreciate you all for partnering together around this. This is a really urgent important issue. We need to do everything in our power. We are asking states to do everything in their power. We're asking you all, if you're not a state, and you are anyone else in the healthcare or broader community, to really help do everything in your power and some of the things Jonathan outlined, those resources, hopefully will help. We have a whole bunch of discussions and stakeholder meetings lined up to really continue this discussion. But we want to make sure all Americans are able to keep their health care coverage for whatever they are eligible for and not have to go uninsured. This really is a call to action for all of you, all of our partners.

Thanks so much for your participation on this and for what folks are doing already and what we are asking you all to help lean in on even more. Thank you again. So, I think with that, we are concluding, and for many of you, we are in many other discussions with you all every day, so thanks very much. Take care, everybody.