



Resuming public health care program renewals: Talking points and media toolkit for DHS partners

Talking points

- Medical Assistance (Minnesota’s Medicaid program) and MinnesotaCare enrollees must have their eligibility for these programs reviewed once a year to ensure they remain eligible for public health care program coverage. This process is called a renewal.
- Starting in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DHS stopped most annual eligibility renewals and closures so we could preserve access to health care coverage for Minnesotans on Medical Assistance (MA) and MinnesotaCare, and qualify for temporary enhanced federal funding.
- Continuous coverage helped Minnesotans access care during a global pandemic and maintained high insurance coverage rates in the state. It also allowed the state to receive billions in additional federal funding under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the first major federal stimulus package passed by Congress.
- In December, President Biden signed a federal spending bill requiring states to return to standard Medicaid eligibility procedures – which includes an annual eligibility review through a renewal process. (This decoupled the continuous coverage requirement from the end of the federal public health emergency.)
- Minnesota will restart renewal processes for Medical Assistance in 2023 beginning with the July renewal cohort.
 - Renewals for Medical Assistance enrollees take place based on the anniversary month of their application for coverage. As a result, Minnesota has 12 monthly Medical Assistance renewal cohorts.
 - For example, a Minnesotan who applied for Medical Assistance in July has a July Medical Assistance renewal date. This means this enrollee needs to complete and submit the renewal paperwork. and it must be processed by the county or tribal worker before July 1.
- Renewals for MinnesotaCare coverage will restart beginning in October 2023 for coverage effective Jan. 1, 2024.
- Restarting this process is a huge undertaking. Renewals aren’t new to Minnesota – they are a regular part of our programs. However, there are some challenges coming out of the pandemic that make restarting the renewals process unique.

- Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, statewide enrollment in Medical Assistance (Minnesota's Medicaid program) and MinnesotaCare has grown by more than 354,000, or 30%, to over 1.5 million people. One in four residents living in the state now get their health care coverage through these public health care programs. As a result, when renewals are resumed, this represents a significantly larger volume of work than has ever occurred in the state's public health care programs history, and for a much larger portion of Minnesotans.
- Federal regulators have given us 12 months to review eligibility for all enrollees, which begins in April.
- Resuming the renewal process will be particularly difficult for enrollees, because:
 - Many who already *had* coverage before the pandemic may have moved, changed jobs or experienced other changes that must be considered in the renewal process;
 - Those who *gained* coverage during the pandemic will be unfamiliar with the process; and
 - It has been over three years since renewals were submitted and processed for *any* enrollee.
- We have an opportunity, and responsibility, to apply lessons learned during our response to COVID-19 about addressing racial and health equity to our resumption of Medicaid renewals process.
 - Minnesota has some of the worst racial health disparities, and also is seeing gaps in access to care for Minnesotans in Greater Minnesota.
 - Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native Minnesotans and other Minnesotans of color, and those who live in Greater Minnesota, are disproportionately covered by public health care programs.
 - We are working in partnership with communities facing structural barriers to make sure we're aligning our resources with those of our partners in community clinics, health care systems and managed care organizations (MCOs) to help people maintain coverage and minimize the disparities we see in the renewals process.
- The most important thing enrollees can do now to maintain their coverage is to make sure they have updated their contact information. The Department of Human Services needs to be able to reach enrollees with important paperwork about how to keep their insurance when it's time for them to complete their renewal. Learn more at mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage.
- Enrollees can also visit the Renew My Coverage webpage for helpful links to information on when they can expect their renewal to take place, information on how to prepare for their renewal, trusted partners to connect with like navigators and MCOs, and how to sign up for updates and news.

Media toolkit

If you get questions from the media about resuming renewals, we encourage you to consult this list of resources. If you would like additional help, please reach out to the media contacts listed at the bottom.

Overview

mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage/overview

Strategies to maintain health care coverage

infogram.com/strategies-to-resume-renewals-1h7g6k0q8jw302o?live

Timeline for resuming renewals

mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage/timeline/

Online dashboard of statewide renewal processing data

mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage/dashboard

Information for enrollees on renewals

mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage

Campaign to update addresses

mn.gov/dhs/mycontactinfo/communications-toolkits

DHS media contact

For help with media questions about public health care program renewals

Sarah.Berg@state.mn.us

MNsure media contact

For help with media questions about Minnesotans transitioning from public health care programs to private health plans

Mary.Robinson@state.mn.us