



Office of the Governor
Division of Medicaid

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Mississippi Medicaid Continues to Qualify Program Participants

The Division is using the same eligibility policy that has been in place for years

JACKSON, MS. - (January 28, 2008) – Today, the Division of Medicaid (DOM) issued the following answers to questions regarding recipient participation in the program.

Question: Why has Mississippi Medicaid and CHIP experienced a decline in enrollment?

1. The DOM is using the same eligibility policy that has been in place for years; however, DOM is enforcing the policy by verifying all factors of eligibility:
 - Household income is verified for one (1) full month;
 - Age, citizenship and the parent/child relationship is verified by viewing a birth certificate for each person applying;
 - Social Security Numbers for each person applying are verified by the DOM by matching with the Social Security Administration.

Many individuals have lost eligibility because they failed to verify one or more factors of eligibility.

2. An annual review of each case is required by federal law. Recipients that do not respond to their review notice have their case closed until they comply. The DOM has a 60% closure rate. When the Department of Human Services (DHS) certified eligibility for families and children and Children's HIP groups via mail through the postal system, their closure rate for reviews was also 60%. We have no reason to believe changing back to that discarded procedure will yield a more efficient result. Additionally, using the postal system will slow down the entire process.
3. The DOM utilizes supervisory reviews of all cases and, as a result, DOM has a 70% approval rate for applications. DHS had a 90% approval rate for applications with little or no supervisory reviews of eligibility.

Question: DOM requires an in-person interview for applications and annual reviews although it is not federally required to do so. Why?

1. DOM uses the in-person interview to provide educational material and provide assistance with the enrollment process.

2. The referral process for the MS Cool Kids (Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment) preventative health program takes place during the interview process. Workers provide written and oral information about the program, allow parents to select a screening provider of their choice, and the result is a referral to the provider so that the child can get health screens at prescribed intervals. Should the DOM not offer in-person interviews, this referral process would not be accomplished.
3. During the in-person interview, discussions take place about relationships within the household and who can qualify for a variety of programs. These are program areas that most families do not know about prior to applying and it is a resource the short written application form does not explore.
4. Effective January 1, 2008, the DOM has had one or more sites in 80 of the 82 counties in the state to take and process applications. There are 30 Regional Medicaid Office sites and 90 out-stationed sites where Medicaid workers can conduct in-person interviews so that the individual does not have to travel to a Medicaid office. Although there is not a worker full time at each site, the hours of operation will be posted and the recipients notified to appear for their interview at the nearest site to where they live. DOM will also use local newspapers to advertise the location and hours of the out-stationed sites so the community will be aware of the availability of remote access to Medicaid.
5. Also effective January 1, 2008, the DOM will begin the use of electronic verification of births within the state for those families who have not already purchased a birth certificate for their child(ren) and cannot afford to do so. The DOM will incur the expense for this birth certification.
6. The ineffective use of notices has been blamed for the decline in enrollment, citing non-receipt of call-in notices as the reason so many cases close. For this reason, DOM will begin plans to expand the use of notices. A new notice will be instituted to notify families when their 12 months of eligibility is about to end. This notice will serve as an advance notice that a review is soon due. Families can then make plans to obtain the verifications needed and come to a site nearest them to have their eligibility reviewed.

According to Medicaid Executive Director Dr. Robert L. Robinson, "Medicaid applicants and recipients need to personally apply only once a year. After the interview, any further communication takes place via mail."

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