



STATE OF WISCONSIN
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

MEDIGAP HELPLINE SERVICES

1402 Pankratz Street, Suite 111
Madison, WI 53704-4001
(608) 246-7013
Medigap Helpline (800) 242-1060
Part D Helpline (855) 677-2783
Fax (608) 246-7001
<http://longtermcare.wi.gov>

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PRESS RELEASE – APRIL 2023
2023 MEDICAID UNWINDING PROCESS

Since the onset of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), state Medicaid agencies have made policy and program changes to respond effectively to the pandemic. This includes a “continuous enrollment condition” for most Medicaid recipients who were enrolled in the program as of March 18, 2020. This enrollment condition allowed Medicaid recipients to remain enrolled in their Medicaid program and retain their benefits even if they no longer qualified for the program due to a change in their situation (i.e. changes in household size, income, etc).

The federal government passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023, which ends the “continuous enrollment condition” on March 31, 2023. However, current Medicaid coverage will not end for any recipients at that time. Beginning April 1, 2023, states will begin what is known as the “unwinding” process which is expected to last approximately 14 months. Most recipients will go through a renewal process during this time frame. It is important to read any mail received from the WI Department of Health Services (DHS). Letters will be sent to recipients with details about their next scheduled renewal date. It is not necessary to renew prior to the renewal date provided by DHS. Up to 90 days prior to the renewal date, an email or text message may be sent as a reminder to update your address. It is important for DHS to have a recipient’s current address information before sending out the renewal packet. This packet will be sent about 45 days before the renewal due date and will include the required next steps. If a person loses their eligibility for one Medicaid program their case may be reviewed to determine if they are eligible for a different Medicaid program.

Recipients who have not yet confirmed their citizenship or immigration status must do so by May 31, 2023. DHS will reach out these individuals in March. Recipients whose Medicaid coverage has been manually maintained by DHS while these special rules have been in place cannot use the standard renewal process and must reapply before May 31, 2023. DHS will reach out to these individuals in April.

The most important thing Medicaid recipients can do now is ensure their mailing and contact information is current and accurate. Recipients can log into their account with access.wi.gov or call their local county Income Maintenance Consortium (<https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/forwardhealth/imagency/index.htm>). Recipients can also get their renewal date information through these resources.

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For individuals who only have Medicare Part A and not Part B and lose their Medicaid eligibility (any time on or after January 1, 2023), there is a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to enroll in Medicare Part B. This SEP begins when a person receives notice of upcoming termination of Medicaid eligibility and ends 6 (six) months after the termination of eligibility. To enroll in Medicare Part B and determine when coverage will begin, contact Social Security Administration (1-800-772-1213 or a local office). For those with both Medicare Part A and Part B, other coverage options may be available such as a Medicare Supplement policy or a Medicare Advantage plan. The Medigap Helpline has counselors available to assist any person who is losing their Medicaid.

For qualified individuals/families not yet entitled to Medicare who are losing their Medicaid coverage due to the end of the “continuous enrollment condition,” there will be a Marketplace Special Enrollment Period (SEP) between March 31, 2023, and July 31, 2024, which will allow enrollment in Marketplace health insurance coverage outside of the annual open enrollment period. Marketplace eligible persons who submit a new application or update an existing application during this time frame and attest to the last date of Medicaid coverage within the same period are eligible for this SEP. These individuals will have 60 days after they submit their application to select a Marketplace plan with coverage that starts the first of the month after they select a plan.

On April 1, 2023, new applicants to Wisconsin Medicaid programs will be covered by regular eligibility rules.

For further assistance, contact the Benefit Specialist program in your county ADRC (<https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/benefit-specialists/counties.htm>), or call the Medigap Helpline with the State of Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care at 1-800-242-1060. Helpline office hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday. Please leave a message detailing your situation and a counselor will return your call.

Submitted by:
Cheryl Zautcke
Medigap Insurance Counselor

