



Changes to the Illinois Medicaid Program for Youth Who Are Leaving or Have Left Foster Care

Affordable Care Act -- ACA (or commonly known as “ObamaCare”)

Beginning January 1, 2014, **youth who are exiting foster care or were formerly in foster care** will be eligible for Medicaid until age 26, as a provision of the Affordable Care Act or ACA.

Children and youth who are **currently** in the legal custody of DCFS and covered by Medicaid do not need to apply for Medicaid through the application procedures described below, until they plan to leave foster care.

Implementation in the State of Illinois:

FORMER FOSTER CARE YOUTH

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services has developed an implementation plan for the expansion of Medicaid for young people who have been in foster care.

Youth who exit foster care at age 18 will receive 12 months of continuous eligibility for Medicaid beginning with the month they exit foster care until their 19th birthday. This has been the practice for a number of years.

Youth who exit foster care at age 19 or later qualify for Medicaid until age 26 under the Affordable Care Act.

There is no automatic enrollment in Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Each person must complete and submit an application.

1. The establishment of the Former Foster Care Program which covers individuals who meet the following criteria:
 - Ages 19 through 25
 - Do not qualify for Medicaid benefits for pregnancy or have dependent children of their own or have a disability
 - Illinois residency
 - Have a Social Security Number (SSN) or proof of application for a SSN
 - Meet US citizenship or immigration requirements

Division of Clinical Practice – Office of Health Services
406 E. Monroe Street, Sta. 22 • Springfield, Illinois 62701
217-557-2689 • 312-814-5516



- Were in foster care and enrolled in Medicaid on the day that they turned age 18 or who are exiting foster care past the age of 18

There are no income limits and resources (assets) requirements for this group.

2. For youth who will be leaving foster care as of or after January 1, 2014, enrollment in Medicaid has begun as of October 1, 2013 through an internet on-line web application called ABE – Application for Benefits Eligibility. The website address is: www.abe.illinois.gov

Applications can also be submitted by calling the following toll-free telephone number:
1 – 800 – 843 – 6154.

Persons can also enroll in person by completing a paper application at one of the DHS Family Community Resource Centers throughout the state.

The preferred application method is the website noted above.

The ABE application includes one question related to Former Foster Care Status in the “Finish” tab of the application: whether the applicant left foster care due to age, that is, turning age 19 or 20 or 21. The applicant must indicate YES for her/himself.

Applicants should be prepared to provide the following information:

- Full Name
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Social Security Number
- Current Address
- Preferred Language
- Receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Pregnancy Status, if applicable
- Names and Social Security Numbers of Dependent Children, if applicable

Child welfare workers who have **youth in ILO, TLP or YIC programs** as well as those placed in institutional care or traditional foster care or relative care homes should ensure that this information is included in the Youth-Driven Transition Plans so that youth exiting DCFS care successfully enroll in Medicaid. Caseworkers can assist the youth in enrolling in Medicaid using the ABE on-line application or other methods at least one to two months prior to exiting DCFS care.

Child welfare workers who have **youth who are pregnant and/or parenting child/ren** can assist with the ABE application at least one or two months prior to exiting DCFS care. These youth and their child/ren would be qualified for the Family Health Plan under Medicaid, even though the children were not in foster care.

Youth who were **adopted or in kin guardianship** whose families received financial assistance in a subsidy from DCFS can also apply for the Medicaid expansion under ACA by enrolling through ABE on-line application or by calling the DHS toll-free telephone number noted above. There is a question which relates to adoption or guardianship status in the “Finish” tab of the application. The

applicant who was adopted or in guardianship should answer “YES”.

In addition to application for Medical Benefits, the ABE application can be used to apply for Cash Assistance and SNAP (formerly called Food Stamps). However, application for these types of assistance require in-person application at one of the DHS Family Community Resource Centers.

The application for Medical Benefits only does not require in-person application.

3. This extended coverage under Medicaid would begin effective January 1, 2014.

4. The Scope of Benefits will include the same benefits which have been part of the Illinois Medicaid Plan:
 - Physician Office Visits
 - Emergency Services
 - Hospitalization
 - Maternity and Newborn Care
 - Mental Health Services
 - Substance Abuse Services
 - Prescription Medications, including Psychotropic medications with prior approval
 - Laboratory Services
 - Preventive and Wellness Services
 - Emergency Dental Services (full dental services for youth ages 18 through 20)

5. At age 26, these young people formerly in foster care would continue to be eligible for Medicaid with the following conditions:
 - Continue to reside in Illinois and
 - Qualify under one of the Medicaid categories: pregnant or have dependent children or disabled or
 - Meet the income threshold of 138% of the federal poverty level,
 - \$15,840 for one person household or \$1,320 per month;
 - \$20,628 for two person household or \$1,720 per month;
 - \$25,975 for three person household or \$2,165 per month.

If child welfare staff have any questions concerning Illinois’ implementation of the Medicaid Expansion under the Affordable Care Act, please contact DCFS staff in the Office of Health Services at 217 – 557 – 5782 or 217 – 557 – 5789 or 312 – 814 - 5516.