



MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-13

Date: May 12, 2020

To: Eligibility Services Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Regional Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2115

Subject: COVID-19 Policy Updates #8

The information in this bulletin provides temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing applications and redeterminations during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins) at <http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins>.

COVID-19 Policy Updates #8

Background

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. On the same date, President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency. Guidance from state and federal leaders emphasize the need for social distancing and limiting contact with others during this time. In light of this guidance, HHSC is temporarily modifying its current eligibility policies to accommodate processing of applications and renewals.

1. Update: Processing Case Actions for Medicaid Programs

COVID-19 Policy

Texas Works Medicaid and Healthy Texas Women

Guidance previously issued in MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-4, Item #6 Processing Case Actions for Medical Programs, MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-06, Item #3 Maintaining Medicaid Coverage, and MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-10, Item #4 Update: Processing Case Actions for Medicaid Programs provided staff with policy and processes for case actions that would result a denial for active Medicaid EDGs. This update replaces the previous guidance.

Staff can now dispose all Texas Works Medicaid and Healthy Texas Women (HTW) case actions and will no longer need to suspend case actions in EWMS that would result in the termination of a Texas Works Medicaid or HTW EDG.

To ensure Medicaid is maintained during the COVID-19 public health emergency, TIERS will automatically reinstate terminated Medicaid EDGs back to active status after disposal and add the following case comment: "*Medicaid eligibility is being sustained due to COVID-19.*"

Exceptions:

TIERS will not automatically reinstate a terminated Medicaid EDG back to active status if:

- The person is subsequently certified for another Medicaid program that has the same or better benefits as the original Medicaid type of assistance.
- The person is receiving Presumptive Eligibility Medicaid types of assistance and non-federal match Foster Care, Adoption Assistance and Permanency Care Assistance Medicaid types of assistance. Medicaid coverage for these

programs are not required to be maintained during the public health emergency.

- The EDG is terminated because a non-Head of Household Medicaid recipient moves out of the household. As a reminder, moving out the household is not a valid reason to deny a recipient's Medicaid during the COVID-19 public health emergency unless the person moved out of state. To ensure these recipients continue to receive Medicaid benefits, staff must use the instructions listed in the "Staff Procedures for Moves Out of Household Exception" section below and:
 - process a change of address and create a new case for the adult non-Head of Household recipient; or
 - manually change the address on the Medicaid EDG, if the recipient who moved out of the household is a child.

Staff Procedures for Moves Out of Household Exception

[TP 07 \(18 and older\)](#), [TP 08](#), [TP 20 \(18 and older\)](#), [TP 40 \(18 and older\)](#), [TP 44 \(18-year olds\)](#), [TP 70](#), and [TA 82](#)

1. Update the date on the **Individual Household Status** page and select "Out of Household." TIERS will remove the recipient from the household's other benefits (SNAP, TANF or both) and terminate the recipient's Medicaid EDG.
2. Manually create a new case using the information from the old case and the recipient's new address. Certify the recipient for Medicaid on the new case with the remainder of their original certification period.
3. If the Head of Household reports that the recipient has left the household and does not report a new address, create a new case using the address from the old case. Do not pend for the new address.
4. Add case comments "*Medicaid eligibility is being sustained due to COVID-19.*"

[TA 41 \(HTW\)](#)

No additional staff action is needed. Following policy recently released in MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-11, 1. Adult Certified for the Healthy Texas Women Program Leaves the Household, TIERS automatically creates a new case when it is reported that a non-Head of Household HTW recipient has left the household.

TP 07 (under 18), TP 20 (under 18), TP 43, TP 45, TP 48 and TP 44 (6-17)

1. If a child certified for Medicaid has left the household, do not select "Out of Household" on the **Individual Household Status** page.
2. Manually change the address for the child's Medicaid EDG by going to the Household LUW and answering "No" for the question "All members live in the same household?" Click next and enter the child's new address.
3. Add case comments "Medicaid eligibility is being sustained due to COVID-19."

COVID-19 Policy

MEPD

Staff must continue to follow the guidance in MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-10, Item #4 Update: Processing Case Actions for Medicaid Programs, for MEPD EDGs.

Automation

Changes to TIERS for Texas Works and HTW were implemented with TIERS Release 106.3.1 on May 9, 2020. Automation changes for MEPD are scheduled to be implemented on June 6, 2020. Staff will receive additional guidance regarding MEPD EDGs before the June 6, 2020 release.

Correspondence

Households will not receive notification that their terminated Medicaid was reinstated back to active status. However, if they receive a TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any other benefit program, TIERS will add this additional note on the TF0001 in the Medicaid Section:

"Your Medicaid coverage will continue through the COVID-19 pandemic. If you no longer qualify for Medicaid after the pandemic ends, we will notify you when your coverage will end and what you will need to do to reapply."

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

The policy is effective with the implementation of TIERS Release 106.3.1 on May 9, 2020. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

2. Update: Extending Children's Health Insurance Program(CHIP) & CHIP Perinatal(CHIP-P) Coverage

COVID-19 Policy

CHIP, CHIP-P

On May 4, 2020, HHSC received federal approval to extend CHIP and CHIP-P certification periods ending in May 2020 for three additional months. Households with certification periods ending May 2020 were automatically extended until August 2020.

Staff Procedures

State office is working with IT to close out TLM tasks for CHIP and CHIP-P programs that have been extended. If staff receive a renewal task for a program that has already been extended, follow the process below:

Staff must take the following actions when benefits have extended due to COVID-19:

- If a household submits/submitted a renewal form before their new renewal due date and the task is waiting to be processed, staff must mark the task in EWMS as No Action Taken- 'Certification Extension' and update the TLM task accordingly.
- If a household submitted a renewal form that is currently pended for missing information, staff must complete the case following normal procedures.

As a reminder, staff must continue to dispose any case actions that result in a denial for active CHIP EDGs.

Automation

TIERS automatically extended CHIP and CHIP-P benefits with certifications ending in May 2020.

Correspondence

Form H1809, Notice of Health Care Benefits Extension, was sent to households with information about the extension for CHIP and CHIP-P certifications ending in May 2020.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.