

Fact Sheet: The Federal Public Health Emergency and Medicaid Continuous Coverage



How has the PHE impacted Medicaid?

In March 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act became law. It implemented a Medicaid Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement for the duration of the Public Health Emergency (PHE), giving states enhanced federal Medicaid funding if they meet certain requirements. One requirement is that states maintain all enrollees' Medicaid coverage, with limited exceptions. This policy is also sometimes called "continuous coverage" or "continuous enrollment." As a result, people have been able to keep Medicaid coverage since March 2020 even if their circumstances have changed or they have not completed a renewal. These will start again when the PHE ends.

How long will the PHE and MOE last?

The MOE will last through the month that the PHE ends. It has been extended several times for 90 days at a time. We do not know when the last extension will occur, but the federal government has said they will give 60 days' notice before the PHE ends.

What will happen when the PHE and MOE end?

States must follow certain guidelines at the end of the PHE to "return to normal." They will have 14 months to redetermine eligibility for all enrollees, so **renewals will be staggered throughout the year**. No enrollee can be terminated until the month after the PHE ends — and only after the state attempts a full renewal. Some people will lose coverage because they are no longer eligible, and some for administrative reasons. The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) estimates that 20 percent of enrollees will lose coverage.

What should enrollees expect?

Some enrollees will be renewed through the ex-parte process, which means the state already has all the information it needs to renew their coverage. These enrollees will get a notice saying their coverage has been renewed — they don't need to do anything else.

If more information is needed, the state will mail a prepopulated renewal packet. The enrollee can fill it out and mail it in, call Cover Virginia (833-5CALLVA) to complete their renewal over the phone, or log into CommonHelp.virginia.gov and submit the information online. They'll need to act before the deadline in the notice to keep their Medicaid coverage! If an enrollee loses coverage, they don't have to wait to reapply. Medicaid accepts applications year-round.

How can enrollees prepare?

The most important thing enrollees can do right now is **update their contact information**. They can do this by contacting their local Department of Social Services (DSS), calling Cover Virginia, or in their CommonHelp account. It will also be important for enrollees to open their mail, pay attention to deadlines, and act when necessary!

What can we do now?

Stay up to date and educate consumers on the steps they can take now. You can visit coverva.org/en/phe-planning to access more information, download DMAS's partner toolkit full of resources, and sign up to receive email or text updates from DMAS.

You can also subscribe to Enroll Virginia's community mailing list for tools to help your community stay informed and covered. Visit enrollva.org/get-involved to learn more.

Where should we direct Medicaid recipients for help?

For additional help, most enrollees should contact Enroll Virginia (enrollva.org/get-help or 1-888-392-5132) to make a free appointment with a navigator. Navigators can help complete renewal forms, reapply for Medicaid, or transition to new affordable coverage through the Marketplace.

Medicaid enrollees ages 65 and older should contact VICAP for free Medicare counseling. They can get in touch with a VICAP counselor through their local Area Agency on Aging (vda.virginia.gov/aaamap.htm) or by calling the Virginia Department for the Aging and Rehabilitative Services (1-800-552-3402).

More resources

[Local DSS office locator tool](#)

[CMS resources for states](#) (communications toolkit & other guidance)

[DMAS unwinding toolkit](#)

[DMAS COVID-19 response information](#)

[Virginia Poverty Law Center Q&A: Medicaid, SNAP, and the PHE](#)