



# Access to Medicaid for Illinois Residents

April 8, 2020

## **ENSURING THE SAFETY AND ACCESS TO MEDICAID FOR ILLINOIS RESIDENTS**

With over 12,000 cases and more than 300 deaths, Illinois has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. As federal and state officials work feverishly to flatten the curve of this disease, Illinois's Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) along with the Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans (IAMHP) and its member plans have increased coordination efforts to combat this public health emergency.

Technical experts from IAMHP and Medicaid Health plans have been working with HFS to find solutions to some of the many issues facing Illinois residents. As a result, the following changes have been enacted to mitigate the impact and spread of the COVID-19, streamline process for new applications and preserve access for current Medicaid members.

## **MITIGATING THE IMPACT AND SPREAD OF COVID-19:**

As the state reinforces shelter-in-place and social distancing guidelines, measures have been taken to halt the acceleration of COVID-19 while meeting the needs of Illinois residents including:

- **Expanding telehealth services** to allow people to continue medical services from home and free up hospital space.
- **Coordinating temporary housing as a Medicaid benefit** for people experiencing homelessness for the 14-day quarantine period.
- **Covering home delivered meals for Medicaid members** who do not have access to meal during the directed social distancing period.
- **Encouraging all Medicaid members to apply for or manage their coverage online at [www.ABE.Illinois.gov](http://www.ABE.Illinois.gov)** to protect staff and members working in facilities.

## **NEW MEDICAID APPLICATIONS**

In the last week of March, more than 178,000 Illinois residents applied for unemployment, a 50% increase from the week before. For those without health insurance, Illinois' Medicaid Managed Care program has implemented new policies to simplify the application process:

- **Expanding staff to process applications** to manage the influx of new Medicaid applications so people have quicker access to medical benefits.

- **Reduced documentation required for Medicaid applications.**  
Applicants can submit an application without waiting for verification documents that are not immediately available.
- **For uninsured patients who need COVID-19 testing or treatment,** hospitals, physicians, and other primary care providers can assist in submitting applications for expedited processing.

For more information or to apply for Medicaid, visit the [State of Illinois' Application for Benefits Eligibility \(ABE\) website.](#)

## **CURRENT MEDICAID MEMBERS**

If you are a current Medicaid member do not worry about losing coverage, the following steps have been taken to preserve access to benefits:

- **Delay action that would end or reduce eligibility of medical services.**  
Medical eligibility known as “redetermination” has been extended 12 months before next renewal.
- **Ensuring access to prescription benefits.** Allowing early refill overrides and authorization extensions for maintenance medications.
- **Removing prior authorizations** for physical, occupational, speech therapies, home health and certain durable medical equipment/supplies. Any prior authorizations obtained with an expiration date will be extended for any service that has been rescheduled.