



Eligibility Operations Memo 20-02
January 1, 2020

TO: Eligibility Operations Staff

FROM: Heather Rossi, Deputy Policy Director for Eligibility *Heather Rossi*

RE: **Automatic Voter Registration**

Introduction

On August 9, 2018, Massachusetts became the 14th state in the country to adopt an automatic voter registration (AVR) system. This state law allows certain state residents who meet the AVR criteria to automatically register to vote when they make transactions at the state's Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) or through MassHealth and the Massachusetts Health Connector.

On January 1, 2020, MassHealth began supporting this new legislation by introducing the AVR functionality in HIX. This functionality uses criteria to automatically send voter registration information of certain individuals on record, listed as the Head of Household (HOH), to the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth (SOC) on a daily basis in the form of a batch file. The SOC will then transmit the information to the individual's town election officials to process the voter registrations.

This AVR process will occur at the time of initial application done by phone or online and will not occur for subsequent Report a Change (RAC) or renewal applications. AVR capabilities will be implemented in phases and will include all forms of initial applications in future releases, such as paper and in-person. This functionality is for certain HOH applicants who meet the AVR criteria.

New AVR functionality will not impact or change current MassHealth voter registration processes.

HIX System Changes

To support the AVR process, new AVR language has been added to the Rights and Responsibilities page for initial applications submitted online or by phone through the HIX. This language informs an applicant of the AVR process and gives authorization to MassHealth/Health Connector to send the HOH information to the SOC for purposes of AVR. The language includes a check box for "Do not use my information for voter registration" to allow the HOH the option to opt out of the AVR process. If this checkbox is selected, no information will be sent to the SOC.

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Upon submission of the initial application, the system will determine if the HOH meets the criteria for AVR:

- HOH is age 16 or older;
- HOH has electronically signed the application;
- HOH attests to a Massachusetts residential address;
- HOH did not attest to a residential or mailing address in the Address Confidentiality Program;
- HOH attests to being a U.S. citizen;
- HOH's citizenship and residency are in a verified status;
- HOH did not select the "Do not use my information for voter registration" checkbox on the Rights and Responsibilities page;
- HOH is not deceased; and
- the application source is online or phone.

If the individual meets the criteria for AVR, then the HOH information—including name, age, address, and citizenship indicator—is sent via batch file to the SOC for purposes of AVR.

If the HOH does not meet the criteria above, no information is sent to the SOC.

The "Eligibility Results" page displays a new AVR section to inform a user if information will be sent to the SOC for voter registration. The messages will be dynamically displayed, depending on the results of the AVR process.

- "Your information has been confirmed and will be sent to your local election official for voter registration." – This message will display when the HOH has met criteria for AVR and information will be sent to the SOC.
- "Your information has not been confirmed and therefore has not been sent for voter registration. If your information is later confirmed, we will send it to your local election official. You can also complete a voter registration application now." – This message will display when the HOH has met criteria for AVR, except for verification of residency and/or citizenship. If the HOH submits verification of residency and/or citizenship within requested time frame and continues to meet AVR criteria, information will be sent to the SOC upon verification.
- "No information will be sent to your local election official because you do not qualify for automatic voter registration at this time. You can still complete a voter registration application now." – This message will display when the HOH does not meet criteria for AVR and information will not be sent to the SOC.
- "No information will be sent to your local election official because you told us not to use your information for voter registration." – This message will display when the HOH has selected the "Do not use my information for voter registration" checkbox and has opted out of the AVR process. No information will be sent to the SOC.

National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

Implementation of the AVR process does not impact existing procedures for voter registration at MassHealth. Under the NVRA, the Help America Vote Act, and related state law, MassHealth will continue to offer applicants and members an opportunity to register to vote, as well as assistance in doing so, upon application for coverage, redetermination, or change of address. The current voter registration processes are not changing. See [EOM 15-07 \(MassHealth Responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act\)](#) for more information about current voter registration procedures.

Questions

If you have any questions about this memo, please have your MEC designee contact the Policy Hotline.