



Eligibility Operations Memo 22-14
November 2022

TO: MassHealth Eligibility Operations Staff

FROM: Heather Rossi, Director of Eligibility Policy

RE: **Federal Public Health Emergency Resource Updates**

Introduction

As part of the ongoing response to the COVID-19 federal Public Health Emergency (FPHE), the federal government passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, to assist individuals affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. This Eligibility Operations Memo provides guidance for the treatment of some of the Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) offered under the CARES Act as they relate to eligibility for MassHealth and other health benefits.

Economic Impact Payments

As a part of the CARES Act, the federal government provided Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) to eligible individuals. These direct relief payments were disbursed in three rounds between March 2020 and March 2021. Until the end of the FPHE, these EIPs are not countable, and should not be included, when determining income- and asset-based eligibility.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

As a result of the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) implemented new programs and additional unemployment assistance to eligible individuals. Until the end of the FPHE, the following pandemic unemployment assistance programs are not countable and should not be included when determining income and asset eligibility:

- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC);
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA);
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC); and
- any extensions of pandemic unemployment assistance under the CARES Act.

Retroactive Patient Paid Amount Reimbursements

Per CMS guidance related to the COVID-19 FPHE, members' Patient Paid Amounts (PPA) were not to increase between November 2020 and May 2021.

As a result, certain residents of skilled nursing facilities were eligible to receive a portion or, in some instances, a full refund of the PPA that was assessed between November 2020 and May 2021. MassHealth will not count full or partial PPA refunds as income or as an asset for the duration of the FPHE. This will give members time to spend down their assets appropriately, if these refunds would have otherwise resulted in assets above the MassHealth limits.

Questions

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