

March 27, 2023

Renewals/disability community

>> Thank you so much. Good afternoon, everyone. I want to quickly thank you all for joining today. My name is Susan, I work at the MassHealth office of long-term services and supports. And I'm so excited to have you here today to talk through MassHealth renewals. And thank you so much for being here. And we can go to the next slide.

Today I am going to speak to what a MassHealth renewal is. Discuss why it is especially important this year. And give you some real concrete information about what you can do to help support the members you serve in preparing for and understanding how to complete renewals and really focus on specific considerations for our members with disabilities. Next slide.

Who this information is for. This information is for folks who are working with our MassHealth members in the community, it is intended to give you some helpful tips about how you can help our members maintain their MassHealth eligibility. There's no implication that by going through the presentation you have access to a member's private health information. However, if you would like to access a member's health information or if a member would like you to, there's information about how to you could become a certified assistance counselor in this presentation and also some information about if a member would like to designate you as an authorized representative, how you can do that. Next slide.

So, what is a MassHealth renewal? Federal law requires MassHealth to check whether a member is still eligible for MassHealth. We refer to this check as a renewal, sometimes we call it an annual review, we also refer to as a redetermination. Renewals generally need to occur every year. For the last several years, MassHealth members received their renewal forms in the mail. Renewals occur at the household level and are sent to the head of the household. Many members will be automatically renewed. This means, that MassHealth will automatically process a member's renewal by matching their information against state and federal data. If the information matches, MassHealth may not need any more information and no action is necessary. We're going to talk a little more about that in a couple of slides. If MassHealth doesn't have enough information to automatically renew a member, members will need to report new information. And they will get a renewal form in a blue envelope. I do -- in this slide presentation on slide 10, there's an image of the envelope that will be really helpful to you. Next slide.

The reason we're talking about renewals this year is because at the beginning of the covid-19 public health emergency, the federal government implemented continuous coverage requirements. In response to the requirements, MassHealth put protections in place that prevented member's coverage from ending. The protections have been in place since February of 2020, a little over three years, and the continuous coverage requirement end on April one, 2023. MassHealth is restarting our standard eligibility renewal process. All of our members will be renewed to ensure they still qualified for the current benefit. However, like we talked about, there will be members who will be automatically renewed. And I'll get into that a little more in the next slide. Renewals for the MassHealth members will make place over the next 12 months. We'll start in April 2023; they will go through march of 2024. This means the MassHealth members can get the renewal forms in mail during this one-year period. I heard it said before, I will say, this is a marathon, not a print. Not everyone will receive renewal forms coming April 1. It could be at any time during this 12-month period. Next slide.

So, this is a note on automatic renewals. As I stated before, when possible, MassHealth will attempt to automatically process a member's renewal through multiple avenues. One of the avenues is MassHealth will automatically process by matching a member's information against state and federal databases. We also have certain members who belong to the following categories who may be automatically renewed. This includes members who are receiving SSI through the united states social security administration because they are 65 and older. And have limited income and resources. Or because they are disabled and have limited income and resources. Including members who are receiving temporary assistance of needy family through the department of transitional assistance and members who are currently or in the custody of the department of children and families. However, I do want to note, if these members do receive a blue envelope with the renewal notice or any other mail from MassHealth, they must respond. In general, these folks will be automatically renewed and will not receive a blue envelope. Next slide.

And as we talked about, I'm going to really highlight a few areas that you, as folks in the community, meeting with the MassHealth members, can help members stay covered. The first is, to help members prepare for their renewals. We can go to the next slide.

So, number one, when you interact with members one-on-one, remind them to report all changes to MassHealth, remind them to update their contact information with MassHealth, and read all mail that is coming from MassHealth. And let them know that you can come and help them understand their mail when it does come from MassHealth. And in spaces where members visit, if you do happen to have a physical location where members come to, you can post a flyer about MassHealth renewals to let folks know it's coming. And MassHealth has produced this really fantastic phase one toolkit that has flyer s specifically for

this purpose. I also want to highlight that we just are live with the phase two toolkit, later on in the slide deck, there will be a link. And downloadable flyers, posters, and materials in nine languages and also has specific information for members with disabilities and older adults. In your member-facing communications, whether it be a newsletters, emails to members, it would be great to put information about MassHealth renewals to let folk know this is coming. Again, in the phase one and phase two toolkits, there's sample thing. I want to say this, the slide deck will be sent to all and there's so much information in here, so, please use it as a resource. There's live links throughout. How do you help a member update information? We tell you let folks know to update it. Here is the easiest way for people to update their information with MassHealth. For members under age 65 years old, their HIX account is the easiest way to update the contact information. If they don't have one, they can create one by following the link on the back of the MassHealth notice or calling this phone number. 844-365-1841. And for all of the members, whether 65 and older or under 65, they can call MassHealth customer service. 800-841-2900. Or help from a certified application counselor or navigator. I will give more information about the certified application counselors and navigators. There's a link here that can direct folks to the CACs and navigators. Next slide.

Here is one of my favorite slides in the deck. It is an image of the blue envelope. So, this is what members will be sent and will contain the MassHealth renewal information. For folks auto-renewed that we spoke about before, won't receive this blue envelope. They will get a notice in the mail letting them know they have been auto renewed. Okay. Next slide.

How can you help MassHealth members when they do receive their renewals? You can help them read and understand the mail they received from MassHealth. You can help translate or if they are vision impaired, help them request large print or braille notices. You can walk through the notices with them. Circle the date they need to renew by. And walk them through instructions and make sure they understand what action they need to take. You can also help members make a concrete plan. And help them decide how they are going to complete their renewal. Whether it would be online, over the phone, or on paper.

And you can also connect them with support resources. If there's an area that a member is asking about that you can't answer, you can connect them with the MassHealth resources that exist to support them. And gone, in a -- again, in a couple of slides, I will talk through each resource and the resources include the MassHealth enrollment centers, certified application counselors and navigators and the MassHealth customer service center. Next slide.

Here's the more details about how to help members complete the renewals. And how a member can complete the renewal. For members aged 65 and under, you can help -- I'm sorry. Under 65 and understand, go to the HIX system to submit renewal. Members over 65, residing in nursing facilities or in a

home and community-based services waiver, the member... Will be able to e-submit their renewal. A little different from the HIX online renewal but will still have an option to submit their renewal online. And the link for the e-submission is right here. Members can complete the application and mail back to the health insurance processing center. Members can call the MassHealth customer service center to complete the renewal over the phone. Or members can schedule an appointment with a MassHealth representative and both of these, there's a link where members can schedule an appointment to complete the renewal form with a MassHealth representative and can be done over the phone... Online, or like a video, in July, there can be in-person scheduling. Okay.

Next slide. So, I'm going to talk quickly through the overview of timelines for renewal. Like I said a couple of times, when possible, MassHealth will automatically process a member's renewal. If MassHealth can't automatically process a renewal, the member will receive a blue envelope in the mail, with the renewal form to complete and return to MassHealth. Typically, the member will have 45 days to respond to the renewal notice. Folks who are in a long-term care facility typically have 30 days to respond. If members respond to renewal notices, but MassHealth still needs more information from the member, members will have an additional 90 days to respond. And we refer to that as the request for information. If hopefully, this all works out and members will receive the MassHealth approval notices and everything will be all set; however, if folks don't respond, they will receive a termination notice. Typically, members will be given at least 14 days after receiving a termination notice before their MassHealth benefits stop. And during the reconsideration period, a member who has been closed for failure to respond can contact MassHealth to complete their renewal and will be reinstated to the day they were closed as long as they contact MassHealth within 90 days of the MassHealth coverage terminating. If a member either didn't receive or just didn't respond to the contents of the blue envelope or to the request for information, as long as they reach out to MassHealth within 90 days of the MassHealth coverage terminating, they can be reinstated. Next slide.

Great. This the slide that lists the resources that exist to help members with their renewals. The first one is, the MassHealth enrollment centers. The MassHealth enrollment centers provide members with phone, virtual, or in-person assistance with the application from MassHealth staff. We recommend folks schedule an appointment ahead of time and this is the link on the previous slide. And there are six MassHealth enrollment centers across the state and you can find the nearest one at this link right here. And there's also certified application counselors and navigators. And CACs and navigators are community-based resources to help members apply for and renew health insurance benefits. They are trained by MassHealth but are not MassHealth staff. Help from certified application counselors and navigators is free but may require an appointment and again at this link right here, you can find the nearest organization. The third

resource is the MassHealth customer service center. If members have questions about their MassHealth renewal that you cannot answer, you can have them call the MassHealth customer service number. And the phone number is 800-841-2900. Assistance is available in a wide variety of languages and callers may request a translator at any time. Next slide.

And here is a slide just around some of the language and translation supports. For the toolkit, the toolkit we touched on earlier in the prescription -- presentation, it is in -- there's materials in several different languages listed here. Community outreach through health care for all will include local language television and radio stations. We are issuing grants to community-based organizations, including those focused on immigrants and refugees. And MassHealth will publish vlogs incorporating asl and offer live asl translation during webinars. Translation services. Renewal forms will be mailed in English or Spanish and are available in large print or braille. Renewal packages are also included babble notices, which will list a whole bunch of languages that indicate key information can be translated for members. For members who require translation of renewal forms, they can receive free translation services through the MassHealth customer service center. The customer service center has representatives who speak a wide variety of languages and there's language line services available.

The certified application counselor list will be indicating which languages are spoken. I don't think that's quite live yet but will be. And we're hosting enrollment events with on-site translators and for individuals who speak asl, MassHealth offers on-demand VRI in MassHealth enrollment centers. Next slide.

So, our health plans at MassHealth are also reaching out to members and providing support for renewals. Our health plan partners, ACOs, MCOs, senior care organizations, *one care* plans, and pace organizations. The plans are actively outreaching and assisting their enrollees to keep them informed about when they receive the blue envelopes and make sure they submit information back to MassHealth to maintain their MassHealth coverage. MassHealth is actively sharing information with our plan partners around when a member is being sent their blue envelope. And the plan partners are conducting calls, emails, texts, outreach to their members. Next slide. If a member no longer qualifies for MassHealth, you can direct them to find affordable healthcare coverage. Members under 65, affordable plan options are available through the connector. (Slight lapse in caption connectivity).

>> There are programs within MassHealth that a member may qualify for based on their circumstances. Next slide. This slide touches on considerations for people with disabilities preparing for renewals. The first is, agreements to share information. Members may have someone in their lives, who they would like to help assist them with managing their MassHealth. And in order for MassHealth to be share information with someone, MassHealth needs to have either a permission to share form or an authorize ed

representative designation form on file. I actually have another slide in a few -- not the next slide, the slide after that talks through each of the forms. Here are the links here for the forms. The other slide will give more information about the differences between these two. The permission to share information form, share information about the member with the person on the form. The designation form, share information with the person listed on the form and for the person to make decisions on behalf of the member. And accommodations. MassHealth has accommodations for older adults and people with disabilities. These accommodations include a disability ombudsman who can provide assistance by explaining MassHealth processes and requirements. And helping MassHealth applicants or members fill out forms. The contact information for the ombudsman is right here in this slide. We also have a TTY/TTD phone number for members deaf and hard of hearing. We have the option to request large print or braille forms by calling MassHealth customer service and touching on the video remote interpreting and assistive listening devices at all MassHealth enrollment centers. I will skip the last section here because we have another slide on this, which is next. We can go to the next slide.

So, will a MassHealth redetermination require them to renew their disability determination? So, that actually depends upon how a member's disability is determined and who it was completed by. If a member -- disability determination was determined by the social security administration, or the Massachusetts commission for the blind, the member's disability review will be done by the social security administration and that is completely separate from the MassHealth renewal. In Massachusetts, the MRC, disability determination service, Massachusetts rehabilitation commission, performs the continuous disability -- continuing disability review on behalf of the social security administration. If members have questions about this process, they should contact the Massachusetts rehab commission's disability determination services number here -- listed at the bottom of the slide. Or contact the Massachusetts rehab commission's ombudsman at this number listed here. If a member's disability determination was completed by the disability evaluation services at UMass medical school, the member may need to complete a disability evaluation form. Their disability is completed by des on behalf of MassHealth. This process is also called the continuing disability review.

If a member needs to complete a continuing disability renew, it'll be mailed to them and arrive at a separate time from the member's MassHealth financial review, which will come in the big blue envelope. Whether a member will receive a continuing disability this year depends on several factors. Including the expected date of their -- expected end date of their disability and the date on their most recent renew. If they need to complete a continuing disability review, they will receive a notice in the mail. If they complete a reviewed during the public health emergency and self-attest to their disability or administratively approval,

they should expect a review this year. Children under 18, do not need to complete a review until they turn 18.

Where to get help if people have questions or need help with their disability review, they should contact the des helpline and the number is listed at the bottom of the slide. Next slide. This slide speaks to more to the permission to share information form and the authorized representative designation. And I think we actually talked about most things on the slide. We can go to the next slide. Other ways you can help. You can sign up for the MassHealth eligibility redetermination list. The link is here in the deck. And you can join the MassHealth healthcare training forum list and attend trainings. Again, the links are here. Or you can become part of the CAC program. As we talked quickly about what CACs do, we are really interested in having any organization become a CAC organization. If you are interested, you can email at the email address listed here at the bottom of the slide. Next slide.

Don't worry, we are getting close here. The MassHealth renewal guide, which has just come out this past Friday, it is a fantastic tool that MassHealth has put together that gives some really, really incredible information when you are helping members complete their renewals. The link is listed right here at the bottom of the slide. And the next slide. This is the link for our MassHealth renewals website. And one more slide. It gets us to the phase two redetermination outreach kit. Here is the link at the bottom of the slide. I told you there are some fantastic material s for you to share with your members. Next slide. Final tips and reminders. If members are under 65, the fastest and easiest way to renew the coverage is online using their HIX account. If members are over 65, in a nursing facility or home and community-based waiver, e-submission is the fastest and easiest way to submit renewals. And remind your members as you meet with them, if they moved, changed jobs, had changes in their household over the past 2-3 years, contact MassHealth to provide them with this information. And do the to the large number of renewals this year, members may have longer than usual hold times at MassHealth customer service. And members may not get their renewal forms right away but should be on the lookout from now until April of 2024. And use the resources to help members, including the MassHealth enrollment centers, customer service centers, CACs and navigators and thank you so much for your attention to this. And for helping to get the word out to our members. And next slide, I think we are at questions. Thank you so much.