

MassHealth Premium Assistance Program

Premium Assistance and TPL Programs



Topics

- What is Premium Assistance?
- Review of Eligibility Criteria
- Investigations, Confirmed Access and Approvals
- What happens when a member doesn't enroll?
- Premium Billing and Premium Assistance
- Member benefits

What is Premium Assistance?

- MassHealth helps eligible members pay for their health insurance by sending them monthly payments
- Eligibility for MassHealth Premium Assistance is determined by the individual's MassHealth coverage type and the type of health insurance that the individual has or has access to
- MassHealth Premium Assistance programs are designed to provide MassHealth a cost effective way of delivering benefits to MassHealth members who have health insurance

Eligibility Criteria for Premium Assistance

MassHealth can provide members with a Premium Assistance (PA) benefit when the member and the health insurance policy meet certain criteria. MassHealth may provide a PA payment to an eligible member when all of the following criteria are met:

- The health-insurance coverage meets the Basic Benefit Level (BBL)
- The health-insurance policy holder is either in the Premium Billing Family Group (PBFPG) or in certain situations the policy holder resides with the individual who is eligible for the PA benefit
- The health-insurance policy is a policy that MassHealth has authorization to purchase based on the eligibility of the MassHealth members covered by the policy

Eligibility Criteria for Premium Assistance

MassHealth may provide premium assistance for the following categories of health insurance:

- Employer Sponsored Insurance (ESI): To which the employer contributes at least 50% toward the monthly premium amount.
- Other Group Insurance Plans: To which an employer may contribute less than 50% toward the monthly premium amount, COBRA coverage, and other group health insurance access.

The categories of health insurance that MassHealth has authorization to provide premium assistance for by MassHealth coverage type are:

MassHealth Coverage Type	ESI 50% Plans	Other Group Insurance Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard (except BCCT members with income over 133%) • CommonHealth • CarePlus • Family Assistance Children at or below 150%FPL, Young Adults, HIV+ and Disabled Adults 	Yes	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Assistance Children between 150% and 300% FPL 	Yes	Not eligible for premium assistance

Insurance Investigations

- MassHealth performs investigations to determine if members:
 - Have health insurance that MassHealth may help pay for; or
 - Have access to ESI in which MassHealth wants the individual to enroll and for which MassHealth will help pay for
- HIX provides information to the Premium Assistance Unit on MassHealth members who have reported health insurance or who have indicated they may have access to ESI
- The Premium Assistance Unit may contact the member, the employer, and/or the health insurance company to determine if the plan(s) available to the member meet the MassHealth criteria for enrollment in coverage
 - The policyholder and his/her employer will need to complete a Premium Assistance Application that includes employee share of premium costs and a Summary of Benefits of chosen plan

Investigations by Coverage Type **MassHealth**

MassHealth Coverage Type	Investigate self declared insurance?	Investigate access to ESI and require enrollment in coverage?
Standard	Yes	Yes, all but BCCT and HIV
CommonHealth	Yes	Yes
CarePlus	Yes	Yes
Family Assistance		
• Children	Yes	Yes
• Young Adults below 150%FPL	Yes	Yes
• Young Adults above 150%	No	No
• Disabled Adults	Yes	Yes
• Adults and Elders	No	No
Limited	No	No

Do members need to wait for an investigation?

No!!!

- Members are encouraged to call and apply for premium assistance on their own if they already have health insurance
- All eligibility approval notices for Standard, CommonHealth, Family Assistance, and CarePlus that are generated out of HIX include the language below:
 - *MassHealth members who have health insurance from a job may be able to get help paying for part of their premium. This health insurance must meet certain rules. For more information contact the MassHealth Premium Assistance Unit at 1-800-862-4840 (TTY:1-617-886-8102 for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled).*

Requirement to Enroll in ESI

Members who have access to ESI that meets MassHealth criteria must enroll in coverage upon request:

- A determination is done in HIX and will generate a notice advising the member of the need to enroll in the ESI plan within 60 days
- Additional notification is sent to the individual who has access informing them of which ESI plan(s) offered by their employer meet the criteria for MassHealth Premium Assistance
- Members must contact the MassHealth Premium Assistance Unit upon ESI plan selection and enrollment in order to begin receiving premium assistance payments

Failure to Enroll in ESI

For members who the Premium Assistance Unit has confirmed access to ESI but member fails to enroll within the 60 day timeframe:

- Upon expiration of the 60 day deadline to enroll into health insurance, HIX will perform an eligibility determination and terminate coverage for all except the following members:
 - Pregnant women in Standard or CommonHealth
 - Children or young adults receiving Standard or CommonHealth

- A termination notice will be sent

Premium Assistance Approval

- An eligibility notice will be sent informing the policy holder of the premium assistance approval and the premium assistance payment amount.
- The policy holder will receive the premium assistance payments monthly for the following month's health insurance premium.
- Premium assistance payments begin in the month of the MassHealth Premium Assistance eligibility determination or in the month that health insurance deductions begin, whichever is later.
- Members are encouraged to sign up for direct deposit of their premium assistance payment

Premium Assistance, Required Member Contribution and Premium Bills

- Members who have been paying a premium bill to MassHealth for their coverage are still required to contribute that amount when they become eligible for premium assistance.
- In most cases the members premium billing amount will become their required member contribution which will be deducted from their premium assistance payment.
 - Example: Thomas Brady is eligible for MassHealth Family Assistance
 - At an FPL of 152% he is charged a bill of \$12/month for this coverage
 - Thomas' mother Mary has Harvard Pilgrim insurance available to her through her employer, Market Basket. The insurance costs \$250/month
 - Upon premium assistance approval, Mary will receive \$238/month to cover Thomas on her insurance

Premium Assistance, Required Member Contribution and Premium Bills

- In some instances a member's premium bill amount is higher than the cost of their health insurance coverage. This usually only happens for CommonHealth members with high incomes. If a member meets the criteria for Premium Assistance, the Premium Assistance monthly payment will offset the MassHealth premium bill. These members will still be responsible for paying this new offset amount to MassHealth
 - Example: Susanne Smith is eligible for MassHealth CommonHealth
 - With an FPL of 800%, her monthly bill for MassHealth is \$646/month
 - Susanne works at MGH and has Tufts Insurance available to her at a cost of \$300/month
 - Susanne's premium bill for MassHealth is greater than the cost of her ESI
 - Upon premium assistance approval, her monthly MassHealth bill will be reduced to \$346/month

How Members Benefit from having ESI and Premium Assistance

MassHealth members often have a misconception that they do not need to enroll in health insurance that they have access to because they already have MassHealth. In fact, enrolling into affordable coverage with Premium Assistance can benefit members for the reasons below:

- Premium Assistance eligible members receive reimbursement toward the cost of their private health insurance – in most cases their ESI will be at no cost to the member.
- Obtaining a primary insurance in addition to MassHealth coverage will provide the member with a greater network of services, and better access the care they need.
- Many MassHealth members with ESI will be eligible to receive the wrap of co-payments, deductibles, and coinsurance.
- Non MassHealth eligible family members (usually parents) can get health insurance coverage (ESI) at low to no cost when other family members are MassHealth members.
- If a household's income increases over the MassHealth eligibility threshold, the family will be able to retain continuity of care with the already existing private insurance, and will not need to scramble to enroll into their ESI or go without health coverage for any period of time.

Contact Us

Premium Assistance Hotline:

1-800-862-4840

Fax:

617-451-1332

Mailing Address:

Premium Assistance Unit

PO Box 9212

Chelsea, MA 02150