

Talking Points: State Announces a Planned Start Date of October 1st for Medicaid Expansion

Key Overall Messages about the October 1 start date

- We appreciate the leadership of the General Assembly and Governor Cooper in securing the passage of HB76, which set us on a path to expand Medicaid and enable access to care for 600,000 North Carolinians.
- Medicaid expansion will be transformative for access to health care in rural areas, for better mental health and for veterans, working adults and their families while bringing billions in federal dollars to the state.
- Since the legislation to expand Medicaid was signed into law in March, NCDHHS has been completing the extensive policy and technical work necessary to launch expansion.
- Because expansion is tied to the passage of the state budget, the department's work and associated timelines for implementation were based on having an approved budget by June 30, 2023.
- With the state budget timeline now slipping into August, NCDHHS has worked with CMS to negotiate a compromise to submit some approval documents early to launch Medicaid expansion on October 1, 2023.
- In order to meet this date, a state budget would have to be approved by September 1, 2023, or Medicaid expansion would have to be "de-coupled" from the state budget.

Key Beneficiary Messages

- Beginning on October 1, Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina will increase the eligible population to all adults aged 19-64 who have incomes up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Beneficiaries will get care the same way as existing Medicaid and be eligible for the same comprehensive benefits and copays as other non-disabled adults in Medicaid
- Medicaid enrollment can happen four ways (today and after October 1):
 - online (ePass.nc.gov)
 - by paper application
 - in person,
 - or by phone.

- To apply, you will need to verify your income and that you are a North Carolina resident. Sometimes additional information is needed.
- More information on how to apply for Medicaid is available at https://ncgov.servicenowservices.com/sp_beneficiary?id=bnf_apply :
 - Before applying, please review the NC Medicaid [eligibility criteria](#).
 - The easiest way to apply for Medicaid and NC Health Choice is online through [ePASS](#).
 - Features of the ePASS Public Portal: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
 - If you cannot apply online, you can also:
 - Apply in person at your local [Department of Social Services](#) (DSS) office.
 - Fill out a paper application and mail to or drop it off at your local [DSS office](#).
 - Call your local [DSS office](#) if one of these methods will not work for you.

What is Medicaid and what is expansion?

- Medicaid health insurance covers regular preventive care, treatment for chronic health conditions, and maternal care. It also includes physician and hospital services, prescription drugs, behavioral health, and more.
- This health insurance provides high-quality and affordable health care options and gives people greater financial security in case of a health emergency. People can be more productive in their jobs. Families can be healthier and spend more time together. The expansion gives coverage to single individuals making about \$20,000 a year. A family of three earning about \$34,000 will have access to coverage through the expansion.

Who's eligible for expansion?

- Many low-income adults, ages 19-64, are likely to qualify for coverage.
- This includes people who work in agriculture or retail, child care, some veterans, children who age out of Medicaid and more.

Key Provider Messages

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- Critical to Medicaid expansion's success is a robust provider network ready to serve newly enrolled beneficiaries. To become a Medicaid enrolled provider, please start the process [here](#).

- Once enrolled, providers can contract with the health plans in their area. Information on provider contracting with health plans can be found [here](#).
- If you are a currently enrolled Medicaid provider, check to make sure your information is correct in NCTracks, including whether you are accepting new patients. For more information about the managed change request process, please see [NCTracks](#).
- NC Medicaid restarted provider reverifications in April 2023 with the end of the federal Public Health Emergency. Check to make sure your verification information is up to date in NCTracks so there is no interruption of your enrollment.

Key County Messages

- Our DHHS Team worked with Director's Association Leadership to anticipate some of the county DSS needs and were able to roll out funding (\$33M) to counties to assist both with the PHE unwinding and preparation for Medicaid expansion. HHS asks that Directors wait until Thursday morning to share this information with staff
- DHHS will provide counties talking points/scripts to assist with responding to questions and calls the agency may receive
- NC Medicaid continues to enhance system automation to increase the number of applications and recertifications that process straight through, without county intervention. In the coming months, NC Medicaid will expand the types of applications and recertifications that are processed straight through, freeing county staff to work on applications and recertifications that need closer attention.
- NC Medicaid is working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to connect to the federally facilitated marketplace (FFM) for Medicaid eligibility determinations. Once NC Medicaid is an FFM-determination state, applicants can apply for Medicaid at HealthCare.gov and bypass the county. While this functionality will not be available at Medicaid expansion launch, NC Medicaid and CMS are working to stand up this functionality as quickly as possible.
- NC Medicaid appreciates that hard work counties do every day as the face of NC Medicaid in our communities. We understand that the continuous coverage unwinding and the launch of Medicaid expansion will put an increased burden on limited county resources and staff, and we continue to work with counties to identify areas where we can enhance, refine, and increase our

support. We appreciate your partnership and all the work you do for North Carolinians during this historic moment in NC Medicaid history.