



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

July 30, 2020

MEDI-CAL ELIGIBILITY DIVISION INFORMATION LETTER NO.: I 20-20

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS

SUBJECT: EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR REFUGEE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
APPLICANTS AND BENEFICIARIES DUE TO THE COVID-19 PUBLIC
HEALTH EMERGENCY (Reference: Medi-Cal Eligibility Division
Information Letter 20-06; 20-07, and 20-15)

The purpose of this Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) is to provide counties and the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) with guidance on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Extended Assistance for eligible Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) beneficiaries.

Background

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) provides time-limited RMA-based Medi-Cal benefits to eligible refugees, asylees, federally certified victims of human trafficking (VOT), and other entrants who are not eligible to receive Title XIX Medi-Cal benefits.

For eligible immigrants, RMA is normally available only for the first eight months from the date refugees are admitted to the United States, or dates of asylum adjudication or VOT certification. In order to provide additional support during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) recently informed states they may request approval of an emergency waiver to temporarily extend the time-limited RMA eligibility period from eight months up to eighteen months if individuals meet all other RMA eligibility requirements. California has received State and federal approval to implement this waiver.

Extended RMA Eligibility Under the ORR Waiver

Pursuant to the approved waiver, California has extended the RMA eligibility period from eight months up to 18 months for clients who became eligible for RMA from April

2019 Month of Eligibility (MOE) up to and including the January 2020 MOE. The extended eligibility under this waiver cannot go beyond September 2020 MOE. Implementation of the 18-month extended RMA-eligibility period is subject to the following guidelines:

- The immigrant must have been granted RMA eligibility that started between the April 2019 and January 2020 MOE, inclusive.
- The extended eligibility under this waiver cannot go beyond the September 2020 MOE.
- The extended coverage does not apply to immigrants whose RMA eligibility period began on or after February 1, 2020. RMA eligibility for these immigrants is limited to eight months.
- If RMA eligibility began on or after April 1, 2019 and was discontinued in 2019, the immigrant must **re-apply** for the extended coverage allowed under the waiver. RMA eligibility for new applicants under the waiver begins in the month of application.
- Immigrants whose eight-month RMA eligibility began in June or July of 2019 and was discontinued at the end of January or February of 2020 respectively, must request the extended RMA coverage allowed under the waiver. DHCS will mail an outreach letter to these individuals. Counties must restore RMA eligibility for these immigrants without a new application. DHCS has provided the impacted counties with information necessary to identify these individuals.
- Counties must identify any immigrants who lost RMA eligibility at the end of March 2020 or later, and restore RMA benefits through the September 2020 MOE without a new application. These immigrants are not required to request the extended RMA coverage to have their eligibility restored. DHCS has provided the impacted counties with information necessary to identify these individuals.
- Prior to terminating any RMA beneficiary, evaluate the case for eligibility in another program in accordance with current RMA policy.
- Follow the policy guidance required by MEDIL I 20-06; 20-07; and 20-15 for the RMA population:

- Counties must delay discontinuance and negative actions to ensure individuals have uninterrupted access to medical care.
- Counties and their respective SAWS should not send reminder notices or requests for verifications through the duration of this PHE.

RMA Notice of Action (NOA) Requirement

Counties must provide proper manual NOA, in accordance with current Medi-Cal policy, that include the following language for approvals and discontinuances of the extended RMA coverage authorized under this waiver:

RMA Extension Approval Language:

“Because of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, [Client Name(s)] is/are eligible for extended Medi-Cal coverage in the Refugee Medical Assistance program beginning [Day/Month/Year] and ending September 30, 2020. Please keep this notice for your records. If you have any questions about this notice, contact your County Social Services Agency.”

RMA Extension Discontinuance Language:

“The extended Medi-Cal eligibility granted to [INSERT NAME(S) HERE] under the Refugee Medical Assistance program because of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, will end on September 30, 2020 because it is time-limited. If you have any questions about this notice, contact your County Social Services Agency.”

If you have any questions, or if we can provide further information, please contact Buck Harris by phone at (916) 345-8162 or by email at Buck.Harris@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sandra Williams, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division