



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



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

February 22, 2021

Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter No.: I 20-20E

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 ERRATA (Reference: Medi-Cal Eligibility Division
Information Letter No.: I 20-20)

Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) I 20-20 implemented a federal waiver, which provides additional support to eligible Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) beneficiaries beyond the 8-month limit through September 30, 2020. The purpose of this erratum is to inform counties that California has federal approval to extend RMA eligibility for those eligible under the COVID-19 RMA waiver through April 30, 2021.

As a result of this waiver extension, RMA beneficiaries in aid code 02 for the September 2020 Month of Eligibility (MOE) based on the RMA COVID-19 waiver, must remain in that aid code through the April 2021 MOE and then continue on Medi-Cal in aid code 02 through the duration of the public health emergency. Corrections to MEDIL I 20-20 are noted as follows:

- strike-through for deleted language
- underline and bolding for new language

Below is the language from MEDIL I 20-20 with revisions

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 **and continuous coverage through the duration of the Public Health Emergency (PHE).**

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~~**twenty five** 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~~**25** 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~~**April 2021** MOE. Implementation of the ~~18~~**25**-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~~**April 2021** MOE.
- The extended coverage does not apply to immigrants whose RMA eligibility period began on or after ~~February~~**September** 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~~ **April 2021** 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.
- **Counties must delay discontinuances and negative actions for RMA beneficiaries during the PHE. Keep RMA beneficiaries in aid code 02 for the duration of the PHE. Counties and their respective SAWS should not send reminder notices or requests for verifications through the duration of the PHE.** ~~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.~~
- **As required by MEDIL I-20-25, please include the following language in the case file for RMA cases with extended RMA eligibility under the waiver, or as a result of the PHE: “Delayed redetermination processing for Medi-Cal or CHIP benefits approved due to state or federally declared major public health crisis or natural disaster.”**

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~~ **April 30, 2021**. 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~~ **April 30, 2021** 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