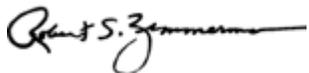


	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE	
	SUBJECT Ammendment to Medical Assistance Bulletin #99-96-08	BY  Robert S. Zimmerman, Jr., M.P.H. Deputy Secretary for Medical Assistance Programs
NUMBER:	99-96-11	
ISSUE DATE:	December 20, 1996	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	IMMEDIATELY	

PURPOSE:

To notify providers of the change in the implementation date of the HealthChoices Program from January 1, 1997 to February 1, 1997. Please refer to Medical Assistance Bulletin # 99-96-08, issued November 18, 1996, effective January 1, 1997, subject "Implementation of the HealthChoices Program."

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the Medical Assistance Program who render services to MA recipients in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties.

DISCUSSION:

As stated in Medical Assistance Bulletin # 99-96-08, you were informed about the implementation of the HealthChoices Program. The information contained in Medical Assistance Bulletin # 99-96-08 is still valid albeit the implementation date of the program has changed.

Medical Assistance recipients in the five-county HealthChoices project area who choose one of the four HealthChoices Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) by January 13, 1997, will receive their physical and behavioral health services through the managed-care initiative beginning February 1, 1997. The four HealthChoices HMOs are:

- HealthPartners
- HMA Health Plan
- Keystone Mercy Health Plan
- Oxford Health Plan

Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) and Healthy Beginnings recipients who are currently receiving their health care through the traditional fee-for-service Medicaid program and do not choose a plan by January 13, 1997, will have until February 10, 1997, to make a choice. If they do not choose a plan by February 10, 1997, they will automatically be assigned to one of the four HMOs and will begin receiving both their physical and behavioral health services through HealthChoices on March 1, 1997.

Please note that all AFDC and Healthy Beginnings recipients will only be able to get Medical Assistance services through one of the four HealthChoices HMOs effective March 1, 1997. If you have AFDC and Healthy Beginnings clients, you will no longer be reimbursed through the Department for services provided to them. After March 1, 1997, you can only be reimbursed for services provided to AFDC and Healthy Beginnings clients if you have an agreement with one of the four HealthChoices HMOs.

Medical Assistance recipients currently enrolled in an HMO, who are receiving behavioral health services, must continue to access these services through their HMOs behavioral health subcontractor until January 31, 1997.

The Department of Public Welfare is delaying the start-up of the HealthChoices Program to give Medical Assistance recipients initially effected by the January 1, 1997, implementation date additional time to choose a managed health-care plan and also to ensure that the selected HealthChoices contractors have complied with the Department's stringent program standards.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll-free inquiry line for your provider type.

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs website at www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap.