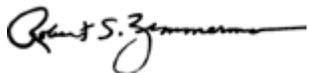


	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE	
	SUBJECT HealthChoices Phase 2 Extension of Enrollment Period	BY  Robert S. Zimmerman, Jr., M.P.H. Deputy Secretary for Medical Assistance Programs
NUMBER:	99-97-04	
ISSUE DATE:	June 17, 1997	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	Immediately	

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to notify providers of an extension in the enrollment period for Phase 2 of the HealthChoices Southeast Program, a mandatory managed care program for Medical Assistance (MA) recipients. The project area for the HealthChoices Southeast Program includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. The Department of Public Welfare ("The Department") is extending the period by which MA recipients in Phase 2 must have made their selection of a HealthChoices HMO from June 18, 1997 (effective July 1, 1997) to August 20, 1997 (effective September 1, 1997).

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the MA Program who render medical services to MA recipients who reside in the five-county HealthChoices Southeast project area.

BACKGROUND:

Through separate waivers of Section 1915(b) of the Social Security Act, the Department implemented mandatory MA managed care for MA recipients for both physical health and behavioral health services in the five-county project area effective February 1, 1997. Under HealthChoices, medical services are currently being provided to recipients through risk-bearing, fully capitated contracts with Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs). Behavioral health services are being administered through separate capitated contracts with a Managed Care Organization (MCO) in each of the five HealthChoices counties.

The Department is implementing the HealthChoices Southeast Program with a two-tiered population phase-in by category of assistance. On February 1, 1997, approximately 330,000 MA recipients falling under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Healthy Beginnings were mandated to enroll in an HealthChoices Southeast Program. Enrollment in an HealthChoices behavioral health MCO will also be made on that date. As of the release of this bulletin, approximately 140,000 of the Phase 2 MA recipients have already enrolled in the HealthChoices Southeast Program. These recipients will continue to receive their physical and behavioral health care services through the HealthChoices Southeast Program. MA recipients in Phase 2 eligibility categories may enroll in the HealthChoices Southeast Program any time prior to August 20, 1997. We encourage individuals to enroll as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition into managed care.

DISCUSSION:

This bulletin announces the extension of the enrollment period for those MA recipients in the Phase 2 eligibility categories until August 20, 1997. On August 20, 1997, any Phase 2 client who has not already chosen a HealthChoices HMO and Primary Care Provider (PCP) will automatically be matched to a plan and assigned a PCP. An accompanying assignment to a HealthChoices behavioral health MCO will also be made on that date. As of the release of this bulletin, approximately 140,000 of the Phase 2 MA recipients have already enrolled in the HealthChoices Southeast Program. These recipients will continue to receive their physical and behavioral health care services through the HealthChoices Southeast Program. MA recipients in Phase 2 eligibility categories may enroll in the HealthChoices Southeast Program any time prior to August 20, 1997. We encourage individuals to enroll as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition into managed care.

The Department extended the mandatory assignment deadline providing Phase 2 recipients with additional time to choose their HealthChoices Southeast HMO and PCP, demonstrating the Department's commitment to ensuring that these vulnerable individuals' transition to mandatory managed care is as smooth as possible. We believe that this extended period will provide all parties involved with additional time to outreach to these MA recipients, and ensure they have the opportunity to actively

select their HealthChoices HMO and PCP. As a provider in the MA Program, you are a critical component to assuring that these vulnerable individuals are able to maximize the opportunity that this extended enrollment period provides.

REMINDER:

MA recipients who reside in the five-county HealthChoices Southeast project area and are not enrolled in a physical health HMO and behavioral health MCO will continue to receive their services through the Fee-for-Service delivery system until September 1, 1997. On September 1, 1997, all MA recipients included in the HealthChoices Southeast Program will begin accessing services from their auto-assigned physical health HMO and PCP and behavioral health MCO. The FFS delivery system will continue beyond September 1, 1997, for MA recipients who are excluded from enrollment in managed care such as persons in nursing facilities and certain waiver programs. Newly eligible MA recipients will also continue to receive their services through the FFS delivery system until they have an opportunity to be enrolled in a participating HMO and MCO, usually between 15 to 45 days after eligibility is determined.

Providers must comply with the HealthChoices HMO and MCO service authorization procedures to ensure continuity of needed care for recipients at the time of enrollment in the HealthChoices program.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll-free telephone number for your provider type.

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