



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Coming Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12237

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H.
Commissioner

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

September 12, 2005

Dear New York State Medicaid Provider:

You are all aware of the tragic events surrounding the impact of Hurricane Katrina and its effect on the Gulf Coast states. As you know, many of the residents of the affected area have been relocated to other states and New York is proud to help our fellow Americans in time of need.

You may be asked to provide services to evacuees, many of whom either have qualified, or should qualify, for Medicaid. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with initial guidance about Medicaid eligibility and reimbursement for services to Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Medicaid providers are asked to help evacuees by providing medically necessary health care services and supplies.

If an evacuee comes to you stating that they are already on Medicaid in Louisiana, Mississippi, or Alabama, you should go to the website of those state Medicaid programs, and access their instructions for emergency provider enrollment in their Medicaid programs. The web sites are:

Alabama <http://www.medicaid.state.al.us/>
Louisiana <http://www.dhh.state.la.us/offices/?ID=92>
Mississippi <http://www.medicaid.state.ms.us/>

Each of these states has established a phone number that providers can use to verify eligibility for an evacuee who states that they are on Medicaid in their home state, but does not have a Medicaid card. The number for each state is:

Alabama: 1-334-215-0111, option 3
Louisiana: 1-800-473-2783, option 0
Mississippi: 1-866-597-2675, ext. 0

If a person from the Gulf Coast area affected by Hurricane Katrina is seeking Medicaid in New York, and is not already eligible for Medicaid in their own state, local departments of social services will accept an application for New York State Medicaid. The State has relaxed documentation requirements, realizing that many of the evacuees have limited access to both money and personal documents. Districts will perform a regular eligibility determination, and authorize coverage initially for four months. This will help to assure access to Medicaid services in a timely manner.

This and related standards are summarized in the State's September 2nd communication to the local districts, an excerpt of which appears below.

In the event an evacuee resident of an area devastated by Hurricane Katrina requests Medicaid coverage, districts must have the individual fill out the application (LDSS 2921 or DOH 4220) as completely as possible.

Districts must tell the applicant to enter his/her last residence in the state from which s/he fled the hurricane on the "home address" section of the application. In the mailing address section, the evacuee must enter his/her current address in New York State. Be sure to request a Social Security Number, but do not hold up the application if the applicant cannot provide it. If a Hurricane evacuee cannot provide a SSN, s/he should be referred to the local Social Security Administration office in accordance with current procedure. Districts must collect such information from the applicant as third party coverage, disability status, most recent employer's name and location, and any other data the applicant can remember and/or verify.

Ask hurricane evacuees to provide all necessary documentation that they have; however, districts must process applications expeditiously if documentation is not available. They should provide a verifiable form of identification, and information about current residence at minimum.

Hurricane evacuees who are determined to be eligible for New York State Medicaid shall be authorized for Medicaid for a four-month period. No authorization shall begin before September 1, 2005. Eligible Hurricane Katrina evacuees are excluded from managed care enrollment.

The Department of Health will update this information to local social services districts and others as further information and instructions become available from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Please note that the Medicaid program is working with the Federal Government and the counties to ensure that all necessary resources are being made available to provide access to health care for evacuees in New York. As soon as we get additional guidance from the federal government on resources and procedures we will communicate that information to providers.

Until that time, providers are asked to do whatever they can to provide medically necessary services, and the State and counties will work to ensure that appropriate Medicaid eligibility is established as soon as possible. I trust that in New York's long tradition of helping those most in need, the New York Medicaid program, and providers will work together to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Thank you very much for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn Kuhmerker', written in a cursive style.

Kathryn Kuhmerker
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Medicaid Management