

TO: Local District Commissioners, Medicaid Directors

FROM: Judith Arnold, Director
Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration

SUBJECT: 2019 Medicaid Levels and Other Updates

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2019

CONTACT PERSON: Local District Support Units
Upstate (518) 474-8887 NYC (212) 417-4500

The purpose of this General Information System (GIS) message is to advise local departments of social services (LDSS) of the income levels and figures used to determine Medicaid eligibility, effective January 1, 2019.

Due to the 2.8 percent (%) cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security Administration (SSA) payments effective January 1, 2019, figures used to determine Medicaid eligibility must be updated. With an increase in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits level, the Medically Needy income and resources levels will also be adjusted accordingly.

The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$135.50 for 2019, an increase of \$1.50 from \$134 in 2018. Most Medicare beneficiaries will pay this amount. An estimated two million Medicare beneficiaries (about 3.5%) will pay less than the full Part B standard monthly premium amount in 2019 due to the statutory "hold harmless" provision, which limits certain beneficiaries' increase in their Part B premium to be no greater than the increase in their Social Security benefits. Due to the SSA 2.8% COLA, some beneficiaries who were held harmless against Part B premium increases in 2018 will pay the full monthly premium of \$135.50 in 2019. This is because the increase in their Social Security benefits will be greater than or equal to the increase in their Part B premium.

The "hold harmless" provision does not apply to the following beneficiaries whose Part B premium will increase to \$135.50 in 2019:

- beneficiaries who do not receive Social Security benefits;
- those who are directly billed for their Part B premium;
- new Medicare Part B beneficiaries;
- those who have Medicare and Medicaid, and Medicaid pays the premiums; and
- those who pay an Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA).

A chart with the 2019 Medicaid levels is attached. MBL will be programmed to use these figures when a "From" date of January 1, 2019, or greater is entered. Also attached is a chart with the updated reduction factors for calculating Medicaid eligibility under the Pickle Amendment.

Note: Budgets with a "From" date of January 1, 2019, or later, that utilize a Federal Poverty Level (FPL) must be calculated with the 2018 Social Security benefit amount and Medicare Part B premium amount until the 2019 FPLs are available on MBL. Upstate districts are instructed to update Social Security benefit amounts and Medicare Part B premium amounts for budgets that do utilize a FPL at the next contact with the consumer or at recertification, whichever occurs first. In New York City, the 2018 Social Security benefit amounts and Part B premium should be used until Phase Two of Mass Re-budgeting.

The following figures are effective January 1, 2019.

1. Medically Needy Income and Resources Levels.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MEDICALLY NEEDY INCOME LEVEL		RESOURCES
	ANNUAL	MONTHLY	
ONE	10,300	859	15,450
TWO	15,200	1,267	22,800
THREE	17,480	1,457	25,013
FOUR	19,760	1,647	28,275
FIVE	22,040	1,837	31,539
SIX	24,320	2,027	34,800
SEVEN	26,600	2,217	38,064
EIGHT	28,880	2,407	41,325
NINE	31,160	2,597	44,588
TEN	33,440	2,787	47,850
EACH ADD'L PERSON	2,280	190	3,263

2. The Supplemental Security Income federal benefit rate (FBR) for an individual living alone is \$771/single and \$1,157/couple.
3. The allocation amount is \$408, the difference between the Medicaid income level for a household of two and one.
4. The 249e factors are .970 and .152.
5. The SSI resource levels remain \$2,000 for individuals and \$3,000 for couples.
6. The State Supplement is \$87 for an individual and \$104 for a couple living alone.
7. If you buy Part A, and you paid Medicare taxes for less than 30 quarters, the Standard Part A premium is \$437. If you paid Medicare taxes for 30-39 quarters, the standard Part A premium is \$240.
8. The standard Medicare Part B monthly premium for beneficiaries with income less than or equal to \$85,000 is \$135.50.
9. The Maximum federal Community Spouse Resource Allowance is \$126,420.
10. The Minimum State Community Spouse Resource Allowance is \$74,820.
11. The community spouse Minimum Monthly Maintenance Needs Allowance (MMMNA) is \$3,160.50.
12. Maximum Family Member Allowance remains \$686 until the FPLs for 2019 are published in the Federal Register.
13. Family Member Allowance formula number remains \$2,058 until the FPLs for 2019 are published in the Federal Register.
14. Personal Needs Allowance for certain waiver participants subject to spousal impoverishment budgeting is \$408.
15. Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) is: Non-Blind \$1,220/month, Blind \$2,040/month and Trial Work Period (TWP) \$880/month.
16. SSI-related student earned income disregard limit of \$1,870/monthly up to a maximum of \$7,550/annually.
17. The home equity limit for Medicaid coverage of nursing facility services and community-based long-term care is \$878,000.

18. The special income standard for housing expenses that is available to certain individuals who enroll in the Managed Long Term Care program (See 12 OHIP/ADM-5 for further information) vary by region. For 2019, the amounts are: Northeastern \$462; Central \$412; Rochester \$419; Western \$360; Northern Metropolitan \$930; Long Island \$1,269; and New York City \$1,300. All regions had a decrease from the 2018 figure.

Please direct any questions to the Local District Support Unit at 518-474-8887 for Upstate and 212-417-4500 for NYC.