



Greater New York Hospital Association

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Kenneth E. Raske, President

September
Fourteen
2005

ML-160

TO: Chief Executive Officers

FROM: Kenneth E. Raske, President

RE: New York State to Facilitate Medicaid Coverage For Hurricane Katrina Victims

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) has issued the attached "Dear Provider" letter explaining its policies regarding current Medicaid evacuees from the Gulf Coast states who need health care services, as well as its process to offer four months of New York State Medicaid coverage with relaxed documentation requirements to evacuees not currently enrolled in their home state Medicaid programs.

We have discussed these issues with DOH since last week and sent email bulletins to your finance, Medicaid eligibility, and related staffs about our expectation that New York would extend temporary Medicaid coverage to evacuees who did not have Medicaid but needed it. The attached letter is New York's official announcement.

To the extent that a Hurricane Katrina evacuee has Medicaid coverage in his or her home state, providers are directed to enroll in and bill those home state Medicaid programs. The DOH letter provides contact information for the Medicaid programs in:

Alabama (<http://www.medicaid.state.al.us/> or 1-334-215-0111, option 3);
Louisiana (<http://www.dhh.state.la.us/offices/?ID=92> or 1-800-473-2783, option 0); and
Mississippi (<http://www.medicaid.state.ms.us/> or 1-866-597-2675, ext. 0)

If an evacuee lacks Medicaid coverage from his or her home state, New York will extend four months of initial coverage under relaxed documentation requirements. These are described in the attached letter and will be reviewed further at GNYHA's Medicaid Eligibility Subcommittee meeting next week by representatives of the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) and others. GNYHA is working with HRA and DOH to ensure that providers can submit evacuee Medicaid applications through their normal channels.

In general, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued emergency guidelines concerning reimbursement for government healthcare and other services provided to evacuees from Gulf Coast states residents who relocate to other states as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The CMS Web site at www.cms.hhs.gov provides a link to a variety of fact sheets and Q&A

documents with Hurricane Katrina information for persons with Medicare or Medicaid or providers. Among other things, President Bush announced that special evacuee status will be granted to government program patients who fled states because of the hurricane. This designation will allow those persons to apply for the full range of federal benefits administered by the states without having to produce the normal forms of documentation to verify eligibility. These programs include: Medicaid; State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP); temporary assistance for needy families (cash grants); child care; mental health services and substance abuse treatment; food stamps; housing; foster care; women, infants and children (WIC) nutrition; school lunch; unemployment compensation; and job training.

CMS is working with several states to develop a new Medicaid and SCHIP application template, through which states may be granted emergency section 1115 demonstrations waivers to provide temporary eligibility for all eligibility groups. These states will be able to retroactively enroll applicants back to August 24, 2005. The administration is working with Congress to provide financial support to states that provided evacuees with Medicaid or SCHIP. CMS is allowing these affected states to count the full expected cost of these services in their federal reimbursement.

For more information concerning this topic, please contact Stewart Presser at (212) 506-5444 or presser@gnyha.org.

Attachment

cc: (all via e-mail) Chief Financial Officers
Accounts Receivable Subcommittee
Medicaid Subcommittee
Patient Access Committee
ED Directors
Directors of Discharge Planning



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,


Kathryn Kuhmerker
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Medicaid Management