

# Medicaid Redeterminations and Enrollment in Employer Coverage

## Frequently Asked Questions for Employers

Since March 2020, federal COVID-related protections have allowed people to stay enrolled in MassHealth. Those protections ended in April 2023, which means hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts residents are expected to lose their MassHealth coverage and will need new health insurance options. Many of those individuals may be employees who need coverage through their employer's plan or a different source.

**Q.** Why will so many people need health insurance?

**A.** MassHealth is the Commonwealth's Medicaid program. During the COVID pandemic, people in Medicaid programs like MassHealth who normally would have lost coverage could keep that coverage. However, MassHealth is redetermining the status of all 2.3 million people who are MassHealth members over a 12-month timeframe that started in April 2023. Most of those people will stay in MassHealth, but many people will no longer qualify for MassHealth and will need new coverage.

**Related resource:**

- [MassHealth redeterminations](https://www.mass.gov/masshealth-eligibility-redeterminations): <https://www.mass.gov/masshealth-eligibility-redeterminations>

**Q.** How does this impact my company?

**A.** Massachusetts requires everyone to have health insurance or face a tax penalty if someone doesn't have coverage. Therefore, if someone in your organization is losing MassHealth coverage, now is the time to help them find new coverage to ensure they do not have a gap in their health insurance and can take advantage of the important health care benefits and services accessed by having coverage.

**Related resource:**

- [Massachusetts Individual Mandate](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/health-care-reform-for-individuals): <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/health-care-reform-for-individuals>

**Q.** Can I add an employee or dependent to my company's health plan?

**A.** Yes, and this may be the best and simplest way for your employee or dependent to maintain coverage. MassHealth is redetermining eligibility and ending coverage for some members over the course of twelve months that started in April 2023. If your employee or dependent is determined no longer eligible for MassHealth coverage, the employee will receive a notification from MassHealth indicating when their MassHealth coverage is ending. You will have a window

of time to add your employee or dependent to coverage because the loss of MassHealth coverage is a HIPAA special enrollment event. That typically allows eligible employees or dependents to request enrollment in your company's health plan within 60 days following the loss of MassHealth coverage.

However, employers are strongly encouraged to extend this special enrollment period beyond the minimum 60 days required by statute. This action is in line with extended special enrollment periods through the Exchanges during the Medicaid redetermination process, and some employees are already eligible for a longer special enrollment period under emergency relief issued by the federal government.

Employers should refer to the guidance in the related resource below, issued by the Departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Treasury to ensure employees have access to their full and possibly extended special enrollment rights.

### **Related resource:**

- [FAQS about Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Coronavirus AID, Relief, and Economic Security Act, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Implementation:](https://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Fact-Sheets-and-FAQs/Downloads/FAQs-Part-58.pdf)  
<https://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Fact-Sheets-and-FAQs/Downloads/FAQs-Part-58.pdf>

**Q.** Do I need to do anything out of the ordinary to add an employee to our plan?

**A.** No. You can follow your usual process when you add an employee or dependent to your company's plan. Contact your broker or whoever manages your company's health insurance policy to add an employee.

**Q.** Do my employees have other options through the Health Connector?

**A.** Your employees could choose to shop through the Health Connector instead, but they won't qualify for state or federal premium savings if the cost of your plan is considered affordable under federal standards. However, if the health plan you offer is considered unaffordable, employees could potentially qualify for help paying for Health Connector coverage through [MAhealthconnector.org](https://www.mahealthconnector.org).

**Q.** How do I know if the coverage I give to my employees is affordable or not?

**A.** It is very likely that your employer-sponsored coverage meets the standards for affordability. In 2023, an employer's plan is considered affordable if the employee's share of the monthly premium in the lowest-cost plan offered is less than 9.12 percent of the employee's household income. If you are unsure if your employer-sponsored coverage is considered affordable, the Health Connector does have [a worksheet](#) that can help you find out.

In 2023, changes were made so that an employee's contribution toward employer-sponsored family coverage is taken into account to determine affordability. This means that if the employer coverage is affordable for the employee but not for family members, the employee might still stay in their employer coverage, while any dependents may be determined eligible for financial help

and enroll in a plan through the Health Connector.

**Q.** I don't offer health insurance to my employees, but have wanted to and might now want to set up a plan for my workers. What do I do?

**A.** In our current competitive workforce environment, now is a great time to offer additional benefits for your employees, including health insurance. If your company has 50 or fewer employees, you can start at the Massachusetts Health Connector for Business, a state health insurance Marketplace that caters to small businesses with lower-cost plans and options to save money while providing plan choices to employees. You can also find a certified broker who can help you complete an application and pick a plan. Find out more about Health Connector for Business at [MAhealthconnector.org/business](https://www.mahealthconnector.org/business).

If you have more than 50 employees, a broker can help you establish a plan to meet your needs and the needs of your employees. You can make sure you're finding a state-licensed broker by going to the [Division of Insurance website](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/consumer-resources).

**Related resources:**

- [Health Connector for Business](https://www.mahealthconnector.org/business): <https://www.mahealthconnector.org/business>]
- [Massachusetts Division of Insurance](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/consumer-resources): <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/consumer-resources>]

**Q.** I don't offer coverage and don't plan to right now. What should my employees do?

**A.** If you have an employee who needs health insurance, encourage the employee to consider coverage through the Massachusetts Health Connector. The Health Connector is the state's health insurance Marketplace, offering individuals and families a range of quality commercial plans that meet state standards for covered benefits and services. The Health Connector is also the only place people can get help paying for their health insurance premiums. People who no longer qualify for MassHealth will get information from the Health Connector. However, they can visit the Health Connector at any time at [MAhealthconnector.org](https://www.mahealthconnector.org), or call 877-MA-ENROLL (TTY: 877-623-7773) to get help in any language.

**Q.** When online, there seems to be all sorts of options for low-cost plans for people. Why don't employees just go to those websites?

**A.** Unfortunately, many websites that come up in search results are from companies that do not offer plans that meet state standards. These products often don't cover basic services, including elective tests, procedures, or even emergency care. This means a policyholder is paying monthly premiums but may be stuck with medical bills for care and a tax penalty for not meeting the standards for the Massachusetts individual mandate.

The best way to make sure employees are choosing a qualifying plan is through the Massachusetts Health Connector. All health plans meet state standards and provide access to vital services. Plus, the Health Connector is the only place for residents to access subsidies to help pay for health insurance. Visit [MAhealthconnector.org](https://www.mahealthconnector.org) to learn more.

**Related resource:**

- [Shop smart to avoid health insurance scams:](https://www.mahealthconnector.org/shop-smart-to-avoid-health-insurance-scams)  
<https://www.mahealthconnector.org/shop-smart-to-avoid-health-insurance-scams>

Q. I could use some help on this. Where can I go?

A. You can learn more by visiting [MAhealthconnector.org/masshealthrenew/employers](https://www.mahealthconnector.org/masshealthrenew/employers), which includes more information, along with a calendar of public webinars and other activities where you can learn more about health insurance for your employees.