



Readiness for the End of the Public Health Emergency

MARISSA WOLTMANN

Health Connector, Senior Director of Policy and Applied Research

MONICA SAWHNEY

MassHealth, Chief of Staff

Board of Directors Meeting, June 9, 2022

Overview

MassHealth and Health Connector staff have been closely collaborating on plans for the end of the Federal public health emergency (PHE).

- This presentation will review:
 - Background on continuous coverage requirements
 - Preparations underway at MassHealth and the Health Connector to support individuals throughout the process of redetermining eligibility after the PHE ends

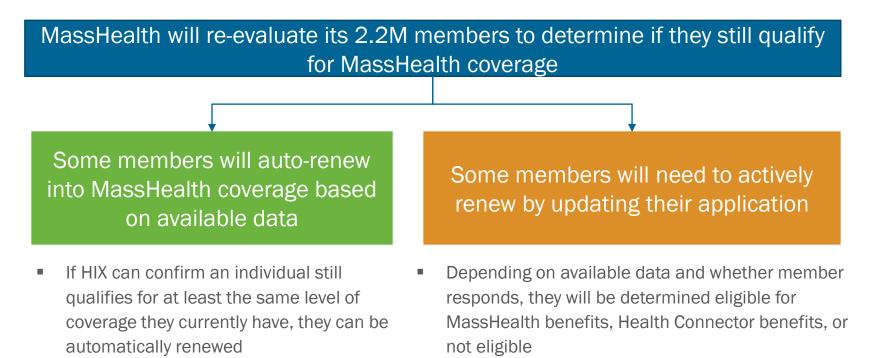


MassHealth is preparing to renew eligibility for all members within a year following the end of the Federal Public Health Emergency

- Federal Medicaid eligibility protections have been in effect since March 2020, and are expected to be extended at least into fall 2022
 - Given the lack of a 60-day notice for the Federal Public Health Emergency to end in July, it is now expected to be extended at least until mid-October. If the Federal Public Health Emergency ends in October, protections would be extended until November 1, 2022
 - This timing is not certain, as these protections could be extended further past this fall
- MassHealth has continued processing renewals throughout the pandemic, providing a head-start on the renewal process once the Federal Public Health Emergency formally ends
 - Many members' eligibility has been renewed as normal
 - Other members who did not respond or who were found ineligible have had their eligibility protected in accordance with federal requirements
- MassHealth must complete renewals for all 2.2M members within a year of the federal public health emergency ending
- The Baker-Polito Administration is committed to minimizing gaps in coverage and supporting members as they maintain or transition to the appropriate coverage
 - MassHealth and the Health Connector are working closely together, and have contracted with Health Care For All to implement an outreach campaign to members
 - MassHealth has been ramping up operations (call center, staffing) to manage increased volume
 - MA's integrated eligibility system (HIX) and Health Connector subsidies will enable smooth transitions for members no longer eligible for MassHealth



Member Movement



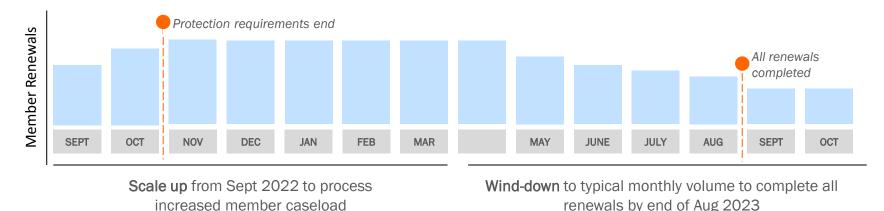
- Expanded allowable variance between income on file and data sources to allow for increased auto-renewal
- The Health Connector will help members found eligible for its programs to enroll



Preparations Underway at MassHealth

MassHealth will complete all renewals over 12-months to balance operational impacts and comply with federal requirements

While the timeline is not yet certain, if the Federal Public Health Emergency ends in mid-October, this process would begin in September and coverage changes would not occur before November 1st



Member Renewal Process:

- Whenever possible, MassHealth will automatically process a member's renewal by matching their information against state and federal data sets
- If a member's renewal cannot be automatically processed, they will receive a blue envelope in the mail with a renewal form to complete
- Members must submit the requested information to receive the health benefit they qualify for. Depending
 on a member's coverage, they can renew online, by mail, by fax, or in-person

Note: Bar heights in chart above are illustrative.



MassHealth is preparing for the end of the PHE in order to minimize gaps in coverage



Increase capacity to address elevated renewal volume

- Hire additional staff and expand vendor capacity to support call center, applications processing, and appeals
- Implement operational changes to increase speed of processing

Implement system changes to support redeterminations

- Raise reasonable compatibility threshold to increase automated renewals
- Stand-up text and email channels to communicate with members
- Improve member contact information accuracy (e.g., National Change of Address data matching, vendor service for validation)

Execute comprehensive outreach strategy

- Focus on collecting updated contact information to prepare for unwind
- Develop equity-oriented messaging approach (media buys, comms toolkit)
- Coordinate closely with advocates, providers/ health plans, and community groups

More detail on next slide





MassHealth and the Health Connector are coordinating closely with Health Care for All and other stakeholders to support outreach and equity efforts

- <u>April</u>: Entered into a joint contract with Health Care for All for outreach campaign
- September: Launch outreach campaign with Health Care for All, Health Connector
 - On-the-ground outreach (canvassing, tabling) and grants to community groups in targeted communities (see right)
 - Targeted media buys with multi-lingual and culturally relevant messaging
- Execute direct-to-member campaigns with text, email, mailings, and robocalls
- Partner with managed care plans, providers, assisters, and other stakeholders to share key messages, update contact information, and support successful renewals
- Encourage use of self-service tools (e.g., HIX self-service portal) and MassHealth enrollment center appointment scheduling
- Additional support for members with disabilities, members who are homeless, and members who are 65+, including targeted communications and dedicated outreach channels



Targeted Outreach Communities

1.	Dorchester (Boston)	8.	Lawrence
		9.	Lowell
2.	East Boston	10.	Lynn
3.	Brockton	11.	Malden
4.	Chelsea	10	New Bedford
5.	Everett	12.	New Deuloiu
0		13.	Revere
6.	Fall River	14.	Springfield
7.	Framingham	15.	Worcester

Encouraging members to share any change of address or circumstances with MassHealth to make sure their information is accurate

We are conducting outreach to ensure members share new address and contact information with MassHealth:



Online: If a member is under the age of 65, the **fastest way** to update their information is with a <u>MA login account.</u>



By Phone: Call a Customer Service Representative at (800) 841-2900, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM till 5:00 PM

Sample Communications



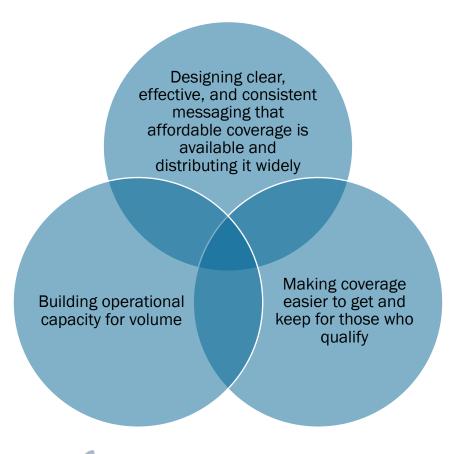


Preparations Underway at the Health Connector

Health Connector Preparations

MassHealth

The Health Connector is working on initiatives to help support members transitioning from MassHealth to Health Connector eligibility.



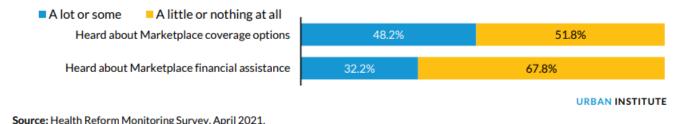




Messaging Affordability

Many people mistakenly assume that they will not be able to afford Health Connector coverage.

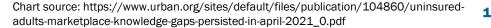
- National data suggest relatively low awareness of Marketplace options and affordability supports
- Focus groups in five languages throughout the month of June will inform key messaging strategies
- Focus group findings will be incorporated into broad-based outreach and marketing as well as "toolkit" materials for stakeholder partners
- Informational materials about Health Connector programs will be updated and translated into 24 languages other than English



Awareness of Marketplace Health Plans and Financial Assistance among Uninsured Adults Ages 18 to 64, April 2021



MassHealth



12

Building Capacity

Staff are working to ensure readiness for an influx of members and applicants in need of support.

 Uncertainty around timing is a challenge, and staff are considering interactions with Open Enrollment preparations

Function Area	Activities
HIX System	 New functionality to manage MassHealth renewals, support assisters, and alert individuals to needed updates or account changes is ready to be turned on
Call Center/Operations	 Accenture is planning to recruit and train additional call center staff to support increased call volume associated with those newly eligible for and enrolling in Health Connector plans Considering impact of increased outbound mail as well as returned mail Chat and chat bot functionality available in June; staff exploring texting capacity
Appeals	 The Appeals team is anticipating increases in volume and will be ready to schedule higher numbers of hearings as needed
Navigators and assisters	 Staff are gathering information on how Navigators would assist individuals at the end of the PHE as part of the ongoing grant application cycle for fiscal years 2023 and 2024 and will reflect in funding as appropriate





Simplifying Enrollment

Ongoing efforts to reduce administrative barriers to coverage will become even more important in the context of PHE redeterminations.

- A new option for applicants to opt-in to be automatically enrolled in zero-dollar premium coverage if they qualify and do not shop has enrolled over 400 individuals since its launch in April
- In February, the Health Connector and MassHealth changed to the allowable variance between the income an applicant indicated and electronic data sources used to validate eligibility from 10 percent to 20 percent to reduce the need for verification documents
- Health Connector and MassHealth staff are working on new templates to help individuals provide income verifications
- Health Connector staff are considering a recommendation to extend the length of the special enrollment period available to individuals who lose MassHealth coverage from 60 to 120 days







Next Steps

Preparations for membership transitions will continue as a top priority, despite uncertainty around timing for the end of the PHE.

- Much of the work underway will be a long-term investment in reducing member gaps in coverage associated with eligibility changes
- Staff will closely monitor developments with an eye toward mid-August, when the administration would provide a 60-day notice of a mid-October PHE end
- Staff will report back to the Board as needed, but with a particular focus on Open Enrollment readiness

