



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hotline Established to Help With Medicaid Requirements

Federal guidelines requiring proof of citizenship began on July 1

BALTIMORE, MD (August 2, 2006) – A Hotline designed to help those who must prove citizenship and identity to obtain and maintain Medicaid benefits has been established by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH).

The Hotline number, 1-866-676-5880, will be answered from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. It will provide information on the types of documents necessary to successfully establish proof of citizenship and identity. Guidance will also be offered to help people obtain the required documents. The Hotline services are multi-lingual.

Individuals enrolled in all DHMH medical care programs, such as *HealthChoice*, the Children's Health Program (MCHP) or any of the various waiver programs provided by DHMH, are affected by new requirements that became effective on July 1.

This change is a result of guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that call for states to obtain proof of citizenship and identity for all program recipients.

“Our department is doing everything it can to help these individuals find the necessary documentation,” said DHMH Secretary S. Anthony McCann. “Our goal is to maintain and enhance access to care for those Marylanders eligible for Medicaid.”

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The documentation is necessary for all new recipients and for everyone who applies for reauthorization of benefits, at the time of their annual review. This is a one-time-only process.

Using a search of Maryland birth certificate and other data resources, DHMH has identified more than 4,000 of the nearly 35,000 individuals with a September deadline for annual review as already meeting the requirements. This process also produced citizenship documentation for more than 19,800 individuals, meaning they only need to prove their identity.

In addition to the Hotline, DHMH has conducted outreach and training sessions to help familiarize people with these new requirements. Town Hall meetings have been held in Baltimore City and Montgomery County, and additional ones are being scheduled for other areas of the state.

DHMH staff is working with staff at the Department of Human Resources (DHR), the agency that oversees social services outreach in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. Social Services workers often assist people who apply or reapply for benefits.

Additional information is available by clicking on 'proof of citizenship requirement' listed in the 'hot issues' portion of the DHMH Web at www.dhmf.state.md.us.

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