



John R. Kasich, Governor
Greg Moody, Director

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Ohio Medicaid to Begin Online Family Enrollment Ahead of Schedule

New eligibility system makes it easier for children and parents to access health coverage

COLUMBUS – The Governor's Office of Health Transformation today announced that low-income families will be able to apply for Medicaid benefits online beginning December 9, nearly one month ahead of schedule. Individuals who will qualify for Medicaid under recent eligibility changes also may begin applying on December 9.

The new online enrollment options are part of a new eligibility system that Ohio launched on October 1. *Ohio Benefits* is a simple, self-service Website that makes it easier for Ohioans to learn what type of health care coverage may be available to them. Originally children and parents were scheduled to be allowed to apply for Medicaid benefits on the new system beginning January 1, 2014.

"Ohio's health care coverage Website is working well," said Greg Moody, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Transformation. "That means we can extend the convenience of being able to start a Medicaid application online to more Ohio families, and ahead of schedule." The goal is for most Medicaid applications to be completed online but, until the new federal system can function reliably, many cases will need to be resolved by county case managers.

"Yesterday we kicked off another round of training for county case managers," said Cynthia Dungey, Director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. "We want to be sure our county partners have the information they need to assist Ohioans who want to complete a Medicaid application in the new eligibility system." To date, county caseworkers have completed more than 13,000 hours of training on how to use the new system.

"Since February, the Kasich Administration has been joined by a coalition of health care and business stakeholders and advocates in an effort to extend coverage to more uninsured Ohioans," said John McCarthy, director of the Ohio Department of Medicaid. "Next month we will begin the next phase in that process – which is connecting our neighbors with the care they need to live better lives."

In October, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved a state plan amendment that would extend Medicaid eligibility to individuals living at up to 138 percent of federal poverty. Later in the month, the legislative Controlling Board approved 5-2 to appropriate federal-only funds to pay for the care of the newly eligible population.

While enrollment for the newly eligible group is set to begin in December, coverage will not start until January 1, 2014. Beginning on December 9, prospective enrollees are encouraged to visit www.benefits.ohio.gov to see if they qualify.

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