


STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Children and Families
Division of Safety and Permanence

To: Area Administrators/ Human Services Area Coordinators
Bureau Directors
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities
Services Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Indian Child Welfare Directors
Licensing Chiefs/Section Chiefs
Tribal Chairpersons/Human Services Facilitators

From: Cyrus Behrooz 
Administrator

Re: BadgerCare+ Questions and Answers

DCFS Memo Series 2008-03 explained BadgerCare+, the new comprehensive health insurance program for low-income children and families. Starting February 1, 2008, health care benefits became available to qualifying child welfare parents and relative caregivers of children temporarily removed from their home and placed under the care and supervision of the state, county, or tribal child welfare system. In addition, youth turning age 18 on or after January 1, 2008 while in Foster Care, Subsidized Guardianship, or court-ordered Kinship Care qualify for a special status under BadgerCare+ when they leave out-of-home care. This memo provides answers to some commonly asked questions regarding this new program.

BadgerCare+ for Parents or Relative Caretakers:

1. What is the time for making the referral to the ES worker?

The timeframe for a referral to Economic Support is determined by local agency policy.

2. Under Procedures on page 2 of DCFS Memo Series 2008-03, "the CW agency must send written communication to the IM worker and provide the following information ..." What if they have no current Income Maintenance (IM) worker? Who should the information be sent to?

The child welfare caseworker should facilitate a discussion with the parent or relative caregivers to connect them to an Economic Support worker if the parent or relative caregiver is interested in receiving BadgerCare+ services. Information should be provided to the parent or relative caregiver with an Economic Support contact person specified in local agency policy or procedure.

3. What if the parent or relative caregiver lives in another county? Which county is responsible for processing the application? How will the communication between counties work?

Parents or relative caregivers must apply for BadgerCare+ services in the county in which they reside.

- 4. Must all the parent or relative caregivers be referred? What if the Child Welfare Agency has information that they would be ineligible (i.e. the parents have a high income or are already covered by a medical insurance plan)? In some counties a small percentage of parents will qualify.**

The BadgerCare+ program provides health insurance coverage to child welfare parents and caretaker relatives who may not have qualified in the past or may not have been aware of services available to them. The benefits are intended to help overcome any medical, AODA, or mental health problems that contributed to the children being removed and to aid in reunification. Agencies should offer BadgerCare+ services to any parent or relative caregiver who may potentially qualify for this important benefit. The Economic Support program will determine the applicant's final eligibility.

- 5. Does a referral form need to be submitted each time the child's placement changes?**

Information about a child's placement change must be shared with the Economic Support program if the child is placed with a relative and the child is leaving the relative's home not expecting to return, since the placement change may affect a relative caregiver's ability to receive benefits under the BadgerCare+ program.

- 6. Must an application be provided to a parent who is not currently involved with the Child Welfare Agency?**

No, if a parent is not working towards a plan of reunification, BadgerCare+ program information does not need to be provided to that parent. However, information should be shared with any parent whom the child has a goal of reunification or relative caregiver involved with child welfare to provide them with the opportunity to enroll.

- 7. When referring a parent what documentation will the ES worker need to confirm that the permanency plan goal is reunification and that the parent is cooperating with the permanency plan?**

The only information that needs to be provided to the Economic Support worker to verify the goal of reunification is documented on the referral form. Economic Support workers do not need a copy of the child's Permanency Plan or other documents to confirm the permanence goal of reunification or that the parent is cooperating with the permanency plan. However, if a court determines reunification is no longer a permanency plan goal, written communication of this change must be sent to the Economic Support worker. The permanency plan goal of reunification only affects a parent's eligibility for BadgerCare+. In situations where reunification has been ruled out or the parent is no longer cooperating with the permanency plan goal (i.e. a TPR petition filed) the child welfare agency may still be required to serve the parent even if the parent loses BadgerCare+ eligibility.

Questions regarding BadgerCare+ for Youth Exiting Out-of-Home Care:

- 1. Are youth who are turning 18 years old, but living in a supervised independent living arrangement categorically eligible for Badger Care Plus? These youth are under the care and supervision of the state, county, or a tribe under a court order.**

Yes. The key criteria is whether the youth remains under a court order as foster youth and thus under the placement and care responsibility of the county or state child welfare agency.

2. For youth exiting OHC but living with a provider in another county, what do they use for an address of residence?

Youth should use the address where they think they will be living after exiting OHC on their application. Refer to DCFS Memo 2008-03, "Procedures" section on p. 4.

3. Which county is responsible for processing an application?

The county of residence is responsible for processing an application, so the youth should submit an application to the county in which he or she will reside upon exiting out-of-home care.

4. If the child aging out of care is an undocumented resident is he/she eligible for Badger Care+?

No, youth must be a citizen, national, or qualifying alien in order to qualify for Badger Care+. Refer to DCFS Memo 2008-03, "Policy for Youth Exiting Out-of-Home Care" section, p. 3.

5. It has been reported that some ES workers were considering a child reunified if the child went to live with their birth family after they aged out of foster care. How can we communicate that the youth is still eligible?

Youth are eligible for BadgerCare+ if they age out of foster care, regardless of where they live once they leave foster care. The only exceptions are that a former foster youth is excluded from eligibility of BadgerCare+ if they become an inmate or move out of state; their eligibility resumes when they are no longer an inmate or move back to Wisconsin until they turn 21 years old. Once the youth has been identified to the CARES system as a youth who aged out of foster care, etc., CARES will make sure the youth will be covered under BC+, regardless of the eligibility for the rest of the family.

Youth who are in a correctional placement on their 18th birthday are never eligible for BadgerCare+ under the "youth exiting out-of-home care category", however, they may meet other eligibility criteria.

6. What happens when a child is discharged on their 18th birthday and caseworkers have been directed to document their birthday as the discharge date? It makes it look like the child was not in care on their 18th birthday and thus would not be eligible for BC+.

Counties and Tribes are encouraged to consider eligibility requirements for BadgerCare+ when discharging a youth from Foster Care, Subsidized Guardianship, or court ordered Kinship Care when they reach age 18. Workers should follow the eWiSACWIS documentation guidelines which direct workers how to document the last night a youth resided in out-of-home care. Economic Support workers do not have access to this information on eWiSACWIS to determine a child's placement or discharge information. The referral form provided to Economic Support workers should include the correct dates showing a child's discharge from out-of-home care.

7. Should foster parents be charged co-pays for foster youth who turn 18 years old and are still placed in foster care under a court order?

No, foster parents should not be charged co-pays for office visits or prescriptions for youth

living in their foster home who are still formally placed in foster care under a court order. If this happens, the foster parent should contact the youth's caseworker who should follow up with the Economic Support worker to make sure the youth's eligibility has not been changed prematurely. The transition to BadgerCare+ should not occur until the youth exits out-of-home care when the court order ends.

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Attachment: [DCFS # Memo 2008-03, BadgerCare Plus for Child Welfare Parents, Caregivers, and Youth Exiting Out of Home Care](#)

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