


To: DCF Area Administrators
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
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: The Certification of Foster Care Medicaid

PURPOSE

This memo clarifies policy and procedure requirements for the certification and cancellation of Medicaid (MA) coverage for children and youth in out-of-home care and provides an overview of the enhancements to eWiSACWIS to improve timeliness and processing of MA coverage. This memo describes policies and procedures that must be followed in order to end Foster Care Medicaid coverage timely and avoid gaps in health care coverage when children leave out-of-home care.

The eWiSACWIS enhancements are being implemented and the policies and procedures are being clarified in order to ensure consistent application of policy and procedures throughout the state and to ensure compliance with federal law and to simplify child welfare workload.

BACKGROUND

Child welfare agencies are responsible for completing Medicaid Certifications in eWiSACWIS for children in out-of-home care placements. The certification of Foster Care Medicaid is entered manually by various individuals within the agency into eWiSACWIS, and the certification information is sent electronically to the ForwardHealth InterChange system so that Medicaid Certification is on file for that child. Often, the certification of Foster Care Medicaid is delayed, certified incorrectly, or not completed. This can prevent or delay children in out-of-home care from obtaining necessary medical services timely.

Income Maintenance (IM) and Child Welfare agencies must develop a procedure between the two agencies to ensure that when a child is discharged from out-of-home care a separate re-determination of MA eligibility is completed by the IM agency before Foster Care MA is terminated. This action is required under federal Medicaid regulations. As part of this requirement, it is expected that the Child Welfare agency extend MA eligibility under Foster Care Medicaid, until a re-determination of MA eligibility is done by the IM agency.

See DCFS Information Memo 2006-03 for historical information. These requirements have not been implemented uniformly across the State, resulting in policy non-compliance and some children and youth not receiving the health care coverage for which they are eligible.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) are partnering to develop new automated processes and procedures to address these problems and simplify caseworker workload which are being implemented with this memo.

EFFECTIVE DATE AND ACTION

In order to improve timely Medicaid Certification for children in out-of-home care, the Certification of Foster Care Medicaid will be automated through eWiSACWIS, effective with the November 20, 2015 eWiSACWIS release.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS

Initial Foster Care Medicaid Certification

All children and youth placed in out-of-home care are categorically eligible for Medicaid benefits in Wisconsin. Effective November 20, 2015, Foster Care Medicaid will be systematically certified for children in out-of-home care upon the approval of a placement strip for that child in eWiSACWIS. The automated generation of a Foster Care Medicaid Certification is dependent upon the creation and approval of a child's out-of-home care placement strip. Child placements into out-of-home care must be entered into eWiSACWIS and approved within 5 days of placement, as required per Ongoing Services Standards. A manual certification of Foster Care Medicaid will no longer be required upon placement in out-of-home care.

The Foster Care Medicaid certification containing the child's information and eligible medical status (med stat) code will be sent to ForwardHealth InterChange following an approval of the child's placement strip to certify the child for Foster Care Medicaid for no longer than 12 calendar months. The certification date will begin the date the child was placed in out-of-home care, and continue through the end of the 11th month from the date of placement. This certification will take precedence over any other benefit plans that may be on file for that child in ForwardHealth InterChange.

Foster Care Medicaid Certification Renewal

Federal regulations state that Foster Care Medicaid can be certified for no longer than 12 months; and in order to continue eligibility, a renewal must be completed. Prior to the expiration of the initial Foster Care Medicaid Certification, eWiSACWIS will complete an administrative renewal to verify that the child continues to be placed in out-of-home care by verifying there is an open placement strip entered for the child. If there is an open placement strip for the child, eWiSACWIS will automatically generate a new Foster Care Medicaid Certification for an additional 12 months. For purposes of completing an administrative renewal, no action is needed on behalf of the child or the child's family.

Foster Care Medicaid Certification Following an Address Change and Out-of-State Placements

When a child changes placement or the out-of-home care provider's address changes, the addresses must be updated in eWiSACWIS. The updated address information will be sent to

ForwardHealth InterChange to update the MA certification upon the approval of a change of placement or address update in eWiSACWIS. The MA certification end date will not change, but the MA certification start date will update to reflect the date the child began residing at the new address.

If a placement strip for the child is created in error, eWiSACWIS will automatically send a new certification to ForwardHealth InterChange upon approval of the new placement information. Until the corrected placement information is entered, the MA certification in ForwardHealth InterChange will reflect the information that was approved for the placement created in error.

Children placed outside of Wisconsin through the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC) will continue to require manual Medicaid oversight. Following the November 2015 eWiSACWIS release, when an out-of-state placement is approved, eWiSACWIS will send information to ForwardHealth InterChange to certify the child for Foster Care Medicaid, and will notify the primary worker if a child's address is not in Wisconsin to request a review of the Foster Care Medicaid certification. The child welfare agency is responsible for coordinating Medicaid coverage for the child when placed out-of-state, as a child may not be dually enrolled in Medicaid through both states. If the state in which the child is placed agrees to provide Medicaid coverage to the child, the child welfare agency must manually send a cancellation of Foster Care Medicaid through eWiSACWIS.

The Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Adoption and Interstate Services Section will manually certify and monitor the Medicaid coverage for children placed in Wisconsin through ICPC from another state in eWiSACWIS.

Foster Care Medicaid Certification Cancellation

Federal and state regulations specify that no child should have their Foster Care Medicaid end until:

- The child is determined eligible for another category of Medicaid;
- The child is determined ineligible for any other type of Medicaid;
- The child or family has failed to provide the required information to complete an eligibility determination or chooses not to pursue Medicaid benefits; or
- The child dies or leaves Wisconsin.

In order to allow time for a Medicaid eligibility determination to be completed upon a child's discharge from out-of-home care and avoid a gap in health care coverage, Foster Care Medicaid certification will automatically be extended in eWiSACWIS upon approval of a placement ending in discharge from all placements. The extended Foster Care Medicaid certification will be for a period of three calendar months beginning from the first of the month following the date of discharge from out-of-home care. This three month period will allow for the IM agency to request verification, if needed, to determine eligibility or send an application for the family or youth to apply for Medicaid coverage.

Following the November eWiSACWIS release, when ending a placement strip for a reason of discharge from out-of-home care, the user entering the information will be asked to input the address where the child will reside once discharged from out-of-home care. This information, as well as other information critical to complete a determination of Medicaid eligibility will be sent to the Department of Health Services through an eWiSACWIS report in order to notify IM agencies to initiate working with families to determine Medicaid eligibility following a discharge from out-

of-home care. This eWiSACWIS report is being developed following the November eWiSACWIS release, and will be sent to the Department of Health Services before the end of 2015.

Once the IM agency receives the child or youth's information from the Department of Health Services, IM will begin standard procedures to complete a Medicaid Eligibility Determination for the child, including contacting families if necessary. Once IM Agencies begin this process, it is the responsibility of the family or the youth aging out of care to meet all requirements and requests for information in order to complete the Medicaid re-determination process.

If the legal guardian with whom the child will reside after discharge is not currently receiving any of the benefits mentioned above, the family or youth must file a new application to have their Medicaid eligibility redetermined. The child welfare worker should do their best to assist the family or youth.

Child welfare agencies should have established processes and procedures in place for successful transitions from out-of-home care, including processes and procedures to collaborate with IM agencies to ensure that a child discharging from out-of-home care has a completed Medicaid Eligibility Determination and will not experience a gap in health care coverage.

Obtaining Health Care Benefits after Discharge from Out-of-Home Care

During the three months of extended Foster Care Medicaid Certification, county child welfare agencies and IM agencies must work together to inform and assist the family or child in getting health care benefits. The eWiSACWIS report does not serve as a replacement for communication between child welfare agencies and IM agencies but instead serves as a safety net to prevent children or youth from losing benefits during a discharge from out-of-home care. Both child welfare agencies and IM agencies must continue to work together and communicate to prevent the child or youth from experiencing any gaps in health care coverage.

It is a best practice that the child welfare worker reminds the family or youth of the importance of applying for health care benefits and provides basic education about how to apply for health care benefits. See the section titled "Ways to Apply for Health Care" below on how the child welfare worker may help inform the family or youth on how to apply for health care benefits.

Ways to Apply for Health Care

Families with children discharging from out-of-home care or youth aging out of care can apply for health care benefits online, by mail, by phone or in person with the IM agency. At the time of discharge, the child welfare worker should provide some basic education to the family or youth about how to apply for health care to prevent a gap in health care coverage after the child or youth's Foster Care Medicaid ends. Included below is a summary of ways to apply:

- **To apply online**, go to ACCESS.wi.gov and click on Apply for Benefits. ACCESS is an online application tool and is the fastest and easiest way to apply for BadgerCare Plus, Medicaid or FoodShare. Some families who are already receiving BadgerCare Plus, Medicaid, or FoodShare benefits may already have an ACCESS account online. These families can report changes to their household online through their ACCESS account.
- **To apply by phone or in person**, find the IM agency associated with the child or youth's county of residence after discharge at

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forwardhealth/imagency/index.htm> . Both the phone number and address of the IM agency are listed on the website.

- **To apply by mail**, complete an application for health care. Applications for BadgerCare Plus can be found online at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/f1/f10182.pdf> . Instructions on how to complete the application and where to submit the application are included.

For youth who are aging out of care, the child welfare agency must continue to complete the BadgerCare Plus Former Foster Youth Communication form, [F-10184](#), and submit the form to the IM agency when assisting the youth during the application process.

For more information on the eligibility rules and how to apply for BadgerCare Plus, FoodShare, and Caretaker Supplement, see [The Guide to Applying for Wisconsin's Health, Nutrition and Other Program, P-16091](#). This is a booklet that can also be requested in print from the [Department of Health Services](#) and may serve as a helpful resource for families and youth.

Youth Aging Out of Care, Subsidized Guardianships, Adoption Assistance Agreements, and Parents and Relative Caregivers

Youth who were in out-of-home care when they turned 18 may continue to be eligible for Medicaid coverage up to the end of the month of their 26th birthday. The eWiSACWIS release will not affect the way that eligibility for a youth aging out of out-of-home care is certified for Medicaid coverage as an adult. This eligibility determination is completed by IM agencies. The child welfare agency should assist the youth in filling out an application for continued coverage. Form [F-10184](#) Badgercare Plus Former Foster Care Youth has been developed to assist in communicating with IM Agencies. See DSP Informational Memo Series 2014-18 for additional information.

The eWiSACWIS release will not affect the way that eligibility for a child under a Subsidized Guardianship Agreement is certified for Medicaid coverage in eWiSACWIS. If a child under a Subsidized Guardianship moves out of the state of Wisconsin, families must contact the DCF Adoption Medicaid Specialist to initiate Medicaid coverage with the new state of residence through an Interstate Compact on Adoption & Medical Assistance (ICAMA) referral and to cancel the Foster Care Medicaid Certification through eWiSACWIS.

The eWiSACWIS release will not affect the way that eligibility for a child under an Adoption Assistance Agreement is certified for Medicaid coverage in eWiSACWIS. Medicaid certification for children under an Adoption Assistance Agreement will continue to be manually certified by the DCF Adoption Medicaid Specialist through eWiSACWIS. If a child under an Adoption Assistance Agreement moves out of the state of Wisconsin, families must contact the DCF Adoption Medicaid Specialist to initiate Medicaid coverage with the new state of residence through an Interstate Compact on Adoption & Medical Assistance (ICAMA) referral and to cancel the Foster Care Medicaid Certification through eWiSACWIS.

The eWiSACWIS release will not affect the BadgerCare Plus (BC+) Medicaid coverage that parents and caretakers who have children placed in out-of-home care may be eligible to receive. These eligibility determinations continue to be made by local IM agencies. Child welfare agencies must continue to work with local IM agencies to develop and maintain a process of communication about this population. Child welfare and IM agencies may use DHS Form [F-10185](#) for referral purposes and to communicate changes in circumstances. See DCFS Memo Series 2008-03 for additional information.

eWiSACWIS DOCUMENTATION

Child placement changes must be entered into eWiSACWIS within 5 days of the placement change, as required by Ongoing Services Standards.

All actions taken by the child welfare agency to assist the child and/or family in obtaining additional types of Medicaid benefits should be documented in eWiSACWIS case notes.

ACTION SUMMARY

Agencies are required to comply with all practice requirements outlined in this policy. This policy provides clarification on Medicaid eligibility and certification for children and youth who are in or have discharged from out-of-home care, and reflects the changes on how Medicaid for children and youth in out-of-home care is certified following the November 2015 eWiSACWIS release.

REGIONAL OFFIC CONTACT: DCF Area Administrator

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(608) 422-6929

MEMO WEB SITE: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>