

April 2024

Quarter 1 2024 report required by 305 ILCS 5/11-5.1(h).
(Public Act 101-0209)

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) continue to collaborate on our multi-pronged plan to maintain low eligibility backlogs which includes maintaining staffing levels for eligibility workers, providing better training, deploying best practices across both agencies, and rolling out simplified policies and procedures. Addressing the backlog and improving the Integrated Eligibility System (IES) is a primary focus of HFS and IDHS every day.

In addition to our focus on backlog of applications and redeterminations the agencies continue work to address the COVID Public Health Emergency.

Application Backlog

At the end of March 2024, pending Medicaid applications over 45 days were 84,812, down from 147,000 at the end of January 2019 by 58%.

Hiring Personnel – Caseworker Onboarding & Training

We continue to make progress in hiring caseworkers and maintaining staffing levels. Since February 2019, we have added 794 net new caseworkers in local IDHS offices around the state and the HFS Bureau of All Kids. This is a |30%| increase. The onboarding of caseworkers is vital to processing backlogs, applications, and renewals. New caseworkers can take several months to learn the complex system of eligibility. Caseworkers often assist with flagging IES issues, suggesting more efficient processes, and testing new enhancements before full implementation.

Long Term Care (LTC) – Continued Efforts

On April 30, 2019, there were 6,342 pending LTC applications with 4,898 over 45 days old and 15,173 pending admits with 10,196 over 45 days old. As of March 31, 2024, there were 880 LTC applications pending with 189 over 45 days and 1,360 admits pending with 400 over 45 days. The State continues to evaluate the workload and processes to make continual improvements to maintain the progress made on timely application decisions.

The growth of the current backlog is due to the elimination of the PHE waivers, reverting to pre-COVID policies and procedures.

Call Center – Continued Efforts

The Alton Call Center became fully operational on September 16, 2020. There are currently 73 staff on board. The Alton Rede Center has been established to focus on the telephonic SNAP Rede's. There are currently 31 HSC's, with a total of 37 staff. The new IVR is fully functional and implemented to all FCRC's and DHS Call Centers. Staff utilized Telephonic Signature for Redeterminations and Initial Applications.

System Improvements – In Progress

We continue to work on IES system performance initiatives, implementing legislative mandated policy changes, COVID unwinding related changes and issuances, known documented defects, and refreshing IES hardware and software.

COVID Strategies

Beginning in March 2020, HFS implemented a variety of eligibility and enrollment flexibilities to apply during the COVID Public Health Emergency (PHE) with the goal of streamlining application requirements, starting coverage faster, and assuring continued coverage throughout the PHE. These flexibilities included changes to simplify documentation requirements at application, delay renewals and actions that would change or end coverage, disregard assets in determining eligibility, waive premiums and co-payments for children in All Kids and individuals in the Health Benefits for Workers with Disabilities program, cover COVID-19 testing for the uninsured, and provide presumptive eligibility to certain adults.

Some notes because of the PHE ending:

Medical redeterminations resumed at the end of the PHE. The first round included all individuals due for redetermination at the end of June 2023.

The documentation requirement strategies used during the PHE are still in place during the PHE unwinding.

Assets are no longer disregarded in determining eligibility as they had been during the PHE.

Challenges Exist

Despite our significant efforts, challenges remain. HFS, IDHS and DoIT continue to face challenges with finding candidates and onboarding new staff to address IES performance and the backlog of applications and renewals. Strategies to address IES system performance issues are underway, but some are slower than anticipated.

See following page for Reporting of Medical Application and Renewal Processing Data for Quarter 1 2024.

For the purposes of part B of the chart below, please note:

The term “ex parte renewal” refers to a process by which the state systematically uses approved electronic sources during the annual renewal process to automatically verify an individual’s eligibility status and continue medical coverage. Using the ex parte process provides efficiency for both customers and state caseworkers through automation. The state sends Form A to clients found eligible for ex parte renewal.

Eligibility Backlog Reporting

Quarterly Reporting - Eligibility (required by 305 ILCS 5/11-5.1(h))				
A. Medical Applications (End of month)		Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
Total applications on hand by number of days on hand		134,077	133,534	122,192
	0-7 Days	10,301	9,506	8,601
	8-45	46,355	38,413	28,779
	46-90	49,996	42,981	30,434
	91-180	17,675	31,036	40,891
	181+	9,750	11,598	13,487
Total applications on hand by basis for determining income eligibility		134,077	133,534	122,192
	Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI)	34,652	32,708	30,819
	Non-MAGI - Long Term Care	1,139	1,245	1,254
	Non-MAGI - Excluding Long Term Care	19,992	18,354	13,843
	Unknown	78,294	81,227	76,276
Applications over 45 days		77,421	85,615	84,812
	Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI)	20,203	25,458	26,039
	Non-MAGI - Long Term Care	490	521	557
	Non-MAGI - Excluding Long Term Care	13,300	13,934	10,742
	Unknown	43,428	45,702	47,474
B. Medical Renewal (by month in which ex parte decision is made)				
Total number of cases up for renewal in two months		352,390	294,087	331,409
	Form A Mailed (ex parte)	202,619	157,339	173,621
		57%	54%	52%
	Form B (not mailed: not ex parte)	149,771	136,748	157,788
		43%	46%	48%
Reasons Form B - Not Mailed Counts may contain duplicate individuals.		149,771	136,748	157,788
	Aged, Blind and Disabled	4,911	4,071	5,016
		3%	3%	3%
	Unverifiable Income	33,621	26,047	31,295
		22%	19%	20%
	Zero (\$0) Income	0	0	0
		0%	0%	0%
	No SSN	5,139	7,773	30,698
		3%	6%	19%
	Income Exceeds Eligibility Criteria	35,815	35,003	33,165
		24%	26%	21%
	Self-Employment Income	18,022	14,872	15,573
		12%	11%	10%
	Other Reasons	52,263	48,982	42,041
		35%	36%	27%