



# COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) Unwinding & Preparation

Updated 6/28/22

## Agenda

- The COVID 19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) and its Impact to the Kansas Medicaid program
- Preparing for the end of the PHE
- Kansas Unwinding Plan





## COVID-19 PHE and its Impact to the Kansas Medicaid program

- The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) first declared in January 2020 by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, due to the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Since January 2020, the declaration has extended in 90-day increments. The latest extension occurred on April 12, 2022.

<https://www.phe.gov/emergency/news/healthactions/phe/Pages/default.aspx>

- Congress enacted Section 6008 of the Families First Coronavirus Act in March 2020
  - Provided states the option to maintain Medicaid benefits to beneficiaries enrolled as of March 2020
  - In return states receive increased federal funding
- Terminating Medicaid benefits allowed in 3 scenarios:
  - Death
  - By request of the KanCare member
  - Loss of Kansas residency



## COVID-19 PHE and its Impact to the Kansas Medicaid Program

- As of February 2022, KanCare membership increased by approximately 20% in comparison to pre-pandemic enrollment
- Kansas has not terminated Medicaid benefits for individuals enrolled in Medicaid as of March 2020 or later, except for the reasons allowed
- Kansas has not sent renewal forms requiring completion, to members
- Kansas continues to accept household, income, and resource changes reported by members, however, action is not taken to discontinue if the change would result in discontinuance under normal eligibility rules
- When the COVID-19 PHE declaration ends, normal eligibility rules will resume. State Medicaid agencies will need to process all casework not acted upon during the PHE. This period of time is the “unwinding” period.

## Preparing for the End of the PHE

### Prevent Eligibility Discontinuances

- Handling of Returned Mail
- Member messaging and outreach
- Partnering with stakeholders and Managed Health Care organizations

### Facilitate Transitions to other Affordable Coverage

- Updating notice language to include local navigator resources
- File exchange with CMS

### Promote Timely & Accurate Processing

- Increased staffing
- Staff refresher trainings
- Requesting CMS flexibilities

## Preparing for the End of the PHE: Key Messaging



**Respond to  
Requests  
from  
KanCare**



**Update  
Contact  
Information**



**Continue  
to Report  
Changes**

## Preparing for the End of the PHE: Resources

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter  
Kansas Department of Health and Environment

### The COVID-19 PHE and Your Medicaid FAQs

[the-covid-19-phe-and-your-medicaid-faqs-1-22.pdf \(ks.gov\)](#)

[the-covid-19-phe-and-your-medicaid-faqs-sp-1-22.pdf \(ks.gov\)](#)

#### KanCare enrollees:

Has your contact information or household circumstances changed?

Call the KanCare Clearinghouse today:

**1-800-792-4884**



#### Miembros de KanCare:

¿Ha cambiado su información de contacto o las circunstancias de su hogar?

En caso afirmativo, llame al Centro de Información de KanCare hoy para actualizar su información:

**1-800-792-4884**



## Kansas Unwinding Plan

- Kansas plans to spread the delayed renewals (renewals not processed during the PHE) over 12 months, once the PHE ends
  - A renewal determination will be needed for KanCare members
  - During the 12-month period, Kansas will notify members when it's time to renew their Medicaid and when information must be provided to complete their renewal
- Begin with renewals that have been “on hold” the longest
- Kansas’s goal is to complete all renewals within 14 months. This is the current maximum time allowed by CMS. This timeline is subject to changes based on CMS or State direction.
- CMS recommends that states initiate no more than 1/9th of its total renewals monthly. Kansas expects to meet the 1/9th recommendation for most if not all months.
- All hands-on deck
- Allow overtime
- Monitor unwinding efforts via daily reports and weekly meetings.



## Plan Forward

- Kansas will stay abreast of federal guidance and impact to COVID-19 PHE unwinding
  - Attending regular planning and discussion meetings with other states, the National Association of Medicaid Directors and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Kansas will deploy additional communication to beneficiaries and stakeholders once the COVID-19 PHE end date is known
- Kansas will continue to effectively manage existing application intake to reduce carryover processing once the PHE ends.
- Kansas encourages stakeholders to help share messaging.
  - Key messaging for members:
    1. Call KanCare at 1-800-792-4884 to provide updated contact information if the member's address or phone number has changed
    2. When KanCare asks for information, respond by the due date provided
    3. Continue to report changes to KanCare, such as if someone moves in or out of the home or if there is a change in employment

## Thank You/Questions

**Latonya Palmer**

**Director of Eligibility**

Email: [latonya.palmer@ks.gov](mailto:latonya.palmer@ks.gov)

KDHE <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/>

KanCare <https://www.kancare.ks.gov/>

