

Recent Medicaid terminations based on out-of-state residency data from LexisNexis

Health Advocate Alert:

In July-August 2017, HCA terminated about 18,000 Medicaid recipients for lack of Washington State residency. HCA did an address database check through LexisNexis that showed a number of people with out of state addresses. HCA sent 10-day letters asking for address information. People who did not respond were terminated. NoHLA is seeking data from HCA to assess the extent of terminations affecting people who actually may be Washington residents.

Concerns:

Some eligible people may have been terminated. **People at special risk are those who are homeless or have unstable housing.** See HCA's report to the legislature about this.¹ Other groups potentially at risk include **people with difficulty reporting due to a disability or other condition**, and **domestic violence survivors** using protected addresses. But most people with disabilities receive "Classic" Medicaid, not MAGI-based Medicaid, and HCA reports those programs were not part of the address check project.

What advocates can do:

- Watch for clients terminated recently for this reason
- Assist clients who do reside in Washington to restore their Medicaid (see below)
- Assess any clients with disabilities that make them eligible for "Equal Access" services to restore eligibility and to get HCA designation as "Equal Access" eligible
- Notify NoHLA (by email: Ann@nohla.org) if you see clients with these issues; especially let us know if your client has any trouble restoring eligibility

How clients can restore their Medicaid:

- Terminated clients should call HCA at 1-800-562-3022, report they are residents, ask Medicaid to be restored, and HCA will help them address this.
- HCA guidance says terminated clients can reapply for coverage:
 - **Online:** <http://www.wahealthplanfinder.org> or
 - **Call:** 1-855-WAFINDER (1-855-923-4633) or
 - **Mail or Fax:** print and return a paper application from <https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/free-or-low-cost/18-001P.pdf>

AND on the application HCA advises:

- * Mark "yes" on the question about whether you are a resident
- * Mark "yes" to the "seeking coverage" question
- * If you had any gap in coverage, mark "yes" on the question about unpaid medical bills during the past three months
- Appeal: If a client has problems getting restored, clients can as usual appeal terminations within 90 days of the date of termination.

¹ HCA Report to the Legislature, "Medicaid Fraud, Waste and Abuse," April 2016, pages 6-7; accessed at https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/Report-Medicaid_Fraud_Waste_and_Abuse.pdf "Of the 16 clients [out of 50 in the pilot sample] who were sent a letter requesting residency verification, five responded with verification and eleven did not respond. The HCA terminated coverage for these eleven individuals because they did not respond to the letter; however, their failure to respond is not proof they failed to meet the residency requirement.... The HCA knows from experience that homeless individuals' reported addresses may not reflect their state of residence and they often do not respond timely to letters asking for address verification...."