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| <h1>ACF</h1> <p>Administration for Children and Families</p> | U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration on Children, Youth and Families | |
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PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: State and tribal agencies administering child welfare programs funded by title IV-E of the Social Security Act and who operate an automated state or tribal child welfare information system funded by title IV-E.

SUBJECT: Support from state and tribal child welfare information systems for the extension of Medicaid eligibility to young adults formerly in foster care and under age 26.

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES: 45 CFR Part 95; 45 CFR Part 92; 45 CFR 1355.50-57; ACF-OISM-001; ACF-OSS-05; Public Law 111-148 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA); section 1902(a)(10)(A)(i)(IX) of the Social Security Act (the Act).

PURPOSE: This Program Instruction (PI) provides guidance and technical assistance to states and tribes operating state or tribal child welfare information systems pursuant to 45 CFR 1355.50- 57 to support the ACA's mandated extension of Medicaid eligibility to age 26 for certain young adults formerly in foster care.

BACKGROUND: Effective January 1, 2014 young adults formerly in foster care are eligible for traditional Medicaid coverage under the ACA if they:

- are under the age of 26;
- were receiving Medicaid at age 18 or any higher age that IV-E foster care ends in their state;
- reside in the state responsible for their foster care; and
- are not otherwise currently eligible for other Medicaid coverage as a Supplemental Security Income beneficiary.

All states must implement this ACA provision for youth who were enrolled in Medicaid and title IV-E foster care at age 18 or any higher age that foster care ends in the state. In addition, a state has the option to provide coverage to such youth who were enrolled in Medicaid and title IV-E foster care in another state at age 18 or any higher age that title IV-E foster care ends, if the young adult is now living in their state.

The provision of health care to young adults formerly in foster care benefits approximately 180,000 individuals under age 26, with approximately 26,000 aging out of care and entering the extended Medicaid eligibility pool each year.

INFORMATION: The regulations at 45 CFR 1355.53 require an interface, if practicable, between a statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) or a tribal automated child welfare information system (TACWIS) with the applicable title XIX automated eligibility system that determines Medicaid coverage for children in foster care. (It should be noted that at the date of this issuance, no tribe has confirmed plans to operate a TACWIS.)

We are clarifying here that IV-E agencies operating a SACWIS or TACWIS (S/TACWIS) must include available information about the foster care enrollment status of young adults who have aged out of foster care in the required electronic data interface with the appropriate Medicaid system. The information exchanged through the interface must include all the available data necessary to extend Medicaid coverage to former foster care recipients under the ACA.

The status of this electronic exchange must be briefly discussed in future Annual or Operational Advance Planning Documents submitted to the Children's Bureau, as outlined in 45 CFR 95 Subpart F.

The initial requirements for child welfare information systems funded by title IV-E, as published in ACF-OISM-001 in 1995, established an expectation that automated interfaces would provide an efficient, effective and economical method of exchanging information between various state and federal information systems, and reduce program administrative costs related to information sharing. Use of an automated interface for the exchange of common, relevant data between the S/TACWIS and state Medicaid systems will also prevent duplicate data entry regarding the eligibility status of young adults who have left foster care but retain Medicaid eligibility based on ACA provisions.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: We encourage states and tribes whose child welfare information system is not operated as a S/TACWIS to explore opportunities to implement an information exchange regarding foster care enrollment via an automated interface with their Medicaid agency. Tribal title IV-E agencies without an automated interface to state Medicaid system(s) should discuss alternative approaches with the relevant tribal health care agency or state Medicaid agency. For tribes located in multiple states, the tribe should discuss the alternative approaches with the Medicaid agency in each state in which it is located. Consideration should also be given to how the automated interface can support state or tribal policies and practices regarding Medicaid outreach, enrollment, and annual re-certification.

Child welfare program staff are encouraged to work in concert with information technology staff to provide access to historical information for former foster care youth under the age of 26 who aged out of care on or after January 1, 2007. The availability of this information will facilitate efforts to enroll Medicaid eligible youth in the state where they currently live.

INQUIRIES: Director, Division of State Systems, Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families

/s/

Mark Greenberg
Acting Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth and Families