



# Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Current Clients Encouraged to Respond to Request for Info during Renewal Process**

*Redeterminations begun on more than 225,000 individuals as of today*

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is encouraging current clients who remain eligible for Medicaid, ARKids and the Health Care Independence Program (Private Option) to respond if they receive a notice asking for additional information so that their healthcare coverage can continue.

"Every person who has had coverage through one of these programs for at least a year will have an eligibility redetermination in the coming months so they need to watch the mail," said Mary Franklin, assistant director for the DHS Division of County Operations, which oversees the eligibility process. "If clients fail to mail back information we request, their cases will close even if they are eligible. That means they will lose their health insurance."

Though federal law allows people to provide additional information within 90 days and have their cases reopened, Franklin said waiting could cause issues for individuals who have coverage through the private option because they cannot be automatically placed in the same insurance plan they had. Clients will have to pick new insurance plans -- and if the plans are different than the ones they had before, they may have to find different doctors who accept their new insurance.

"It's less disruptive not only for clients, but also doctors and the insurance carriers if we can complete the renewal process and keep cases open for people who remain eligible and want coverage," she explained. "So if you're asked to mail in proof of income within a certain time, I encourage you to do so."

Recent advancements in the Department's new eligibility and enrollment system have allowed DHS to begin mailing out large batches of renewal notices for these programs. A now-fixed process issue delayed the mailing of the first few batches of notices in mid-June, causing some individuals to receive notices just a few days before they were told to turn in additional information. Franklin said the Division delayed closing cases in those batches to ensure people had ample time to respond.

As of today, DHS has initiated 225,433 renewals. DHS Deputy Director Mark White said he was encouraged that 58,617 of the renewals were reviewed and approved by the automated system without a caseworker having to get involved. The more "no-touch" cases the system can do, the more time caseworkers will have to handle complex cases and enrollee questions.

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In addition to those that the system was able to immediately verify that enrollees were still eligible, 64,083 people were sent notices requesting they mail in proof of income within 10 days and another 50,000 households (representing about 100,000 people) were sent notices asking them to renew online at [www.access.arkansas.gov](http://www.access.arkansas.gov). The first phase of the renewal process should be completed by Sept. 30. More notices will be sent out between now and then.

So far, 15,755 had cases closed because they failed to respond to a request for additional information. Franklin said it is possible some of those individuals remain eligible and just don't realize the consequences of not responding because this is their first time participating in the renewal process.

"If people enrolled today get a request for more information and are still eligible and want coverage, it is their responsibility to respond within the timeframe allowed," Franklin said.

Because of the high volume of calls being received, people should follow the instructions on the notice they receive. If the notice asks:

- For "proof of income," enrollees should mail a copy of that notice and a copy of a check stub, employment statement or award letters to Access Arkansas Processing Center, 1095 White Drive, Batesville, AR 72501.

- For individuals to "complete the renewal process" online, enrollees should go to [www.access.arkansas.gov](http://www.access.arkansas.gov). Respond to the voter registration question with a 'yes' or 'no.' On the next page, click the yellow button that says "Log-in/Apply or Renew." Then proceed through the screens as instructed.

If enrollees aren't sure who to contact with questions, they can use this [guide](#) to determine the best contact.

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