



MARCIA J. NIELSEN, PhD, MPH
Interim Executive Director

K A N S A S
KANSAS HEALTH POLICY AUTHORITY

ANDREW ALLISON, PhD
Deputy Director

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Megan Ingmire, Communications Director
785.296.8146

People applying for federally funded medical benefits urged to prepare for new federal citizenship requirements

Two months after the new federal citizenship requirements were implemented for all individuals applying for federally funded medical benefits, the Kansas Health Policy Authority is already seeing dramatic increases in the workflow and urges Kansas residents to be ready with documentation.

“The Kansas Health Policy Authority and Kansas Medical Assistance Program is making every effort to comply with the federal guidelines and ensuring that Kansans are continuing to receive health coverage,” said Dr. Marci Nielsen. “However, these federal guidelines have placed a larger workload on our staff, overburdening them with paper and documents.”

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 requires verification of both citizenship and identification of all new federally funded medical benefits applicants and current recipients. The rules apply to Medicaid, HealthWave XXI and MediKan programs.

“As the number of additional requirements ordered by the federal government continues to increase, it also increases the amount of time it takes our staff to process the applications and reviews. Because there were no federal funds to support this work, this ‘unfunded federal mandate’ could eventually threaten the accessibility of health coverage,” said Dr. Nielsen.

The Kansas Family Medical Eligibility Clearinghouse has reported the number of faxes received, unprocessed applications in house, and applications/reviews in a pending status have all increased significantly.

Dr. Nielsen said, “While these federal guidelines have good intentions, they place a larger burden on our already overwhelmed staff, causing a significant delay in determining eligibility. We want to work with our federal counterparts on these policies and visit with them about our concerns. To ensure every person has access to health coverage, government at all levels need to form a partnership and work together for the interest of Kansans.”

“We are making every effort to allow beneficiaries an appropriate amount of time to supply supporting citizenship documentation,” said Dr. Nielsen. “To help the process, it requires those applying or up for review for Medicaid, HealthWave, and MediKan benefits to be prepared with documentation prior to application. By being prepared, it can reduce the amount of time it currently takes for an eligibility determination to be finalized, easing our workflow and helping Kansans get the care they need sooner.”

Applicants or current beneficiaries can prove their citizenship and identity through providing primary documents. If a primary document is not provided, two separate documents must be obtained—one to establish identity and one to establish citizenship.

For a person born in the U.S., a primary document can be a passport. If the individual does not have a passport, secondary or other level document must be obtained. For persons born outside of the U.S., a Certificate of Naturalization or a Certificate of Citizenship must be provided.

Secondary or other citizenship documents include a birth certificate, other birth records issued by the

Address: Rm. 900-N, Landon Building, 900 SW Jackson Street, Topeka, KS 66612-1220

Kansas Medical Assistance Programs:

Phone: 785-296-3981
Fax: 785-296-4813

State Employee Health Benefits and Plan Purchasing:

Phone: 785-296-6280
Fax: 785-368-7180

State Self Insurance Fund:

Phone: 785-296-2364
Fax: 785-296-6995

State Department, military records or an adoption decree. If you were born in Kansas, you can obtain your birth certificate from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Vital Statistics to satisfy citizenship verification.

Secondary documents that prove your identity include driver's license, Kansas ID card, certain Native American tribal documents, government ID cards and school ID cards with a picture. If you have had a Kansas driver's license but are not able to provide a copy of the current or expired license, you can obtain the identity verification from the Kansas Department of Revenue Driver's License Access.

For children under 16, school records, daycare or nursery school records, certain medical records can be used as identification documents.

Copies are acceptable if they appear to be authentic and paper copies must be clearly marked "COPY."

Current and former Medicare beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients are exempt from both the citizenship and identification verification requirements. In addition, a newborn child born to a recipient mother who qualifies for continuous eligibility is exempt from these requirements until the next redetermination of eligibility.

Dr. Nielsen continued, "I urge all doctors, nurses, and practitioners to educate these beneficiaries of the requirements. Working together on this new federal requirement is essential as we move forward."

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