

## Changes to the SNAP and Medicaid Program are Coming

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, which was unveiled and passed by Congress in late December and signed by the President on Thursday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, contains several provisions of significance that are designed to end pandemic-related policies in SNAP and Medicaid.

For close to three years, since a public health emergency was federally declared around the COVID-19 pandemic, SNAP (food assistance, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and Medicaid programs have been operating under different federal regulations.

Medicaid and snap benefits are now no longer tied to the PHE. The current PHE is set to expire April 11, 2023. Regardless of the status of the PHE going forward, the sunseting of SNAP and Medicaid benefits will take effect.

This change is governed by federal law and as a result neither the Ohio Departments of Job and Family Services or Medicaid, nor county agencies, have control over this policy change.

States and counties are working to notify consumers of these changes and prepare operationally to manage a significant surge in customer inquiries and eligibility-related work.

### Background:

- Medicaid - As a condition of receiving enhanced federal Medicaid funding (FMAP), the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) prohibited states/counties from terminating Medicaid eligibility during the public health emergency for anyone enrolled in the program unless that person 1) moved out of state, 2) died, or 3) requested to be disenrolled. As a result, there is a record-high Medicaid caseload in Ohio with approximately 3.4 million Ohioans enrolled in the program. That means more than one out of every four Ohioans is currently enrolled in the Medicaid program. Congress has now permitted states to begin disenrollment of eligible individuals as soon as April 2023.
- SNAP – Federal law had allowed states to request emergency allotments for households participating in SNAP until the end of either the federal public health emergency declaration or that state’s declaration and Ohio has been providing enhanced emergency allotments to SNAP households since March 2020. Congress has now set forth that the last month of emergency allotments, including maximum benefits, will be February 2023.

### Medicaid:

- Changes made by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 now permit states to begin conducting full eligibility redeterminations, including disenrolling individuals who no longer meet eligibility criteria, in April of 2023. States who follow CMS guidance around this process will remain eligible to receive enhanced federal funding, which will be gradually phased down through the end of the calendar year.

- As such, the federal government is strongly encouraging states to follow their guidance around timing, process and reporting.
- Federal guidance provides states up to 12 months to initiate and 14 months to complete eligibility renewals for all individuals currently enrolled in Medicaid.
- Counties will begin working with the State of Ohio to begin the redetermination process of individuals who are likely ineligible as soon as February, 2023. The first disenrollments may occur as soon as April 2023.

**SNAP:**

- Prior to this legislation, Ohio had been preparing for SNAP maximum allotments to continue until one month after the end of the public health emergency. However, federal law now dictates that SNAP maximum allotments will end after the February issuance and before Medicaid unwinding.
- Clients have been receiving their normal allotment (i.e., the amount they are entitled to receive based on SNAP eligibility rules without emergency allotments) on their normal issuance dates from the 1st to the 20th of the month and their emergency allotments at the end of the month. Beginning in March 2023, clients will only receive the normal monthly allotment.
- Because this is a federal law change, there are no fair hearing rights or fair hearing benefits included on the end of the SNAP emergency allotments.
- In general, SNAP EAs ensured all households received the maximum allotment for their household size. For households that were already eligible for the maximum allotment, they received an additional minimum \$95 per month.

Examples of EA benefits:

- Individual normally entitled to the minimum allotment of \$23 per month has been receiving an additional \$258 per month to receive the maximum allotment of \$281.
- Household of 3 normally entitled to \$180 per month has been receiving an additional \$560 per month to receive the maximum allotment of \$740.
- Household of 4 normally entitled to \$939 per month (maximum allotment) has been receiving an additional \$95 per month, for a total of \$1034.