



Maternal and Child Health Access

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**June 30, 2004**

## **State Finally Stops Cutting Off “Deemed Eligible” Infants From Gateway Medi-Cal!**

On September 12, 2003, a Superior Court in San Francisco held that the CHDP Gateway was violating the laws of “deemed eligibility” because it cut off these infants’ Medi-Cal if their families didn’t complete and submit a regular Medi-Cal application by the end of the month following the month of the Gateway visit. The case is called *Baby Armando Doe v. California State Department of Health Services*; the State has appealed.

**Update: Starting June 1, 2004, the CHDP Gateway started issuing deemed eligible infants Medi-Cal cards that last at least until the first birthday. These infants will *not* have to complete or submit the follow up application to keep their Medi-Cal until age one year. Their Medi-Cal will be *retroactive* to the birth month.**

**Background:** “Deemed eligible” infants are infants under the age of one year whose mothers had Medi-Cal for the birth and who lived together with their mothers in the birth month.

These infants are automatically eligible at birth for Medi-Cal continuously until the first birthday *without* having to submit a regular Medi-Cal application, provide proof of family income, give a Social Security Number (SSN), or complete any of the other usual application procedures.

Changes in family income do *not* affect these infants’ eligibility during the first year of life.

The infant’s Medi-Cal coverage is full-scope, even if the mother’s was restricted to pregnancy-related and emergency care or Minor Consent (Sensitive Services).

A new Gateway form (attached) asks if the mother and infant lived together in the birth month and for the mother’s date of birth and Medi-Cal Beneficiary Identification Card (BIC) number *or* SSN (see new questions, mid-page). This simple information is all that is needed for the Gateway to check whether an infant is deemed eligible. **Providers should make sure to fill this part of the form out for patients under age one year.**

The *MCH Access Newborn Enrollment Project* is funded by  
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

- 1) If the infant is **deemed eligible**, the infant’s case will be put directly into the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) at the time the Gateway processes the information about the mother.

New messages from the Gateway will tell the families of infants who are deemed eligible that the infant has Medi-Cal starting right away and that a BIC card will be sent. If the infant already has a BIC, the family will instead be told to keep using it. The infant’s Medi-Cal “aid code” will be 8U.

Either way, Medi-Cal will be in effect, retroactive to the infant’s date of birth.

- 2) For a small percentage of deemed eligible infants, the message from the Gateway may say they will have a **“share of cost”** (SOC) after the county verifies family income—these are infants whose mothers had a SOC for Medi-Cal for their pregnancy-related care in the month the baby was born. The infant’s aid code will be 8V. Such infants may also qualify for Healthy Families at lower cost than the Medi-Cal SOC, but the Gateway will not send them an application.

These infants will **have no SOC** until the county follows up with the county to verify income. If the family’s income has gone up, the infant’s SOC will **not go up**; but if the family’s income has gone down, the infant’s SOC **will go down**.

- 3) If the infant is **not deemed eligible**, the Gateway messages will be the same as for other children who get Medi-Cal through the Gateway, and the family will be sent an application to fill out and return within a maximum of 62 days. Like all other children who start Medi-Cal through the Gateway, these infants will have Medi-Cal starting the same day of the CHDP visit.

**Important:** *Don’t wait for a Gateway visit to enroll infants in Medi-Cal.*

Hospitals, other providers, plans, community groups, and other assistors should continue making infant referrals, using the Newborn Referral Form (<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/publications/forms/pdf/mc330.pdf> (English) and [http://www.dhs.ca.gov/publications/forms/pdf/mc330\(sp\).pdf](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/publications/forms/pdf/mc330(sp).pdf) (Spanish)) *whenever* they have the opportunity to do so for an uninsured infant.

This is important for getting infants into Medi-Cal as soon as possible and promoting access to care.

**Let Us Know How It’s Working:** Please let MCH Access know if you learn of any problems with the implementation: **(213) 749-4261** Lynn, Celia, Liz, Donald or Luz, or to [lynnk@mchaccess.org](mailto:lynnk@mchaccess.org) or [Lucy@Quacinella.com](mailto:Lucy@Quacinella.com).