



EAST COAST TANF DIRECTORS' MEETING

**October 21, 2010
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WHAT IS EXPRESS LANE ELIGIBILITY (ELE)?

- Auto enrollment process authorized by the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) in 2009.
- Allows a Medicaid agency to certify children for health coverage based on the findings of an express lane agency.



WHY IS ELE IMPORTANT TO LOUISIANA'S CITIZENS?

- Historically high poverty rates
- 5% of children remain uninsured and ELE is an important resource to reach those remaining 40,000 children.
- The highest percentage of uninsured children are in families with incomes from 50%-100% of the federal poverty level. Factors that contribute to this low level of health coverage include low literacy and complicated living situations.



INTERNAL FACTORS IN IMPLEMENTING ELE

- Fiscal constraints have led to a reduced number of eligibility staff members and the caseloads of the remaining staff have grown significantly.
- The agency has successfully implemented administrative simplifications in the past to relieve overburdened staff.
- ELE was identified as another tool in the administrative simplification tool box.



HOW DOES IT WORK IN LOUISIANA?

- In the first phase of ELE, Louisiana opted to fully automate enrollment into Title XIX Medicaid utilizing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) determinations made by the SNAP agency in Louisiana, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
- In February of 2010, a file of all SNAP eligible children was sent from DCFS to DHH and an ELE case was created for those children that were known to the Medicaid eligibility system, but not certified at the time.



HOW DOES IT WORK IN LOUISIANA?

- That initial match captured all children active in SNAP but not Medicaid up until the point of ELE implementation.
- In order to cover children certified in SNAP after ELE implementation, the process is repeated with children added to the SNAP system in the previous month being enrolled in Medicaid.
- We plan to move to a daily interface in early 2011.



HOW DOES IT WORK IN LOUISIANA?

- For newly ELE certified children, the Medicaid eligibility system queries SSA citizenship data to confirm citizenship.
- Approval notices are sent to individuals enrolled through the express lane agency that explain the services that are available, how to access those services and that the child will receive a Medicaid card via mail.



HOW DOES IT WORK IN LOUISIANA?

- To comply with CHIPRA requirements, the notice explains that, by using the card to obtain medical care for the child, the guardian has given their affirmative consent for the child to be enrolled into Medicaid.
- We are working to add an affirmative consent statement to the SNAP application.
- Coverage will begin on the first day of the month in which the SNAP file was received by Medicaid.



HOW DOES IT WORK IN LOUISIANA?

- Children receive 12 months of continuous eligibility unless DCFS notifies DHH that the child has moved out of state or is deceased.
- During the month an ELE child turns 19, the case is flagged for renewal and manually reviewed by staff for potential eligibility in another program.



PHASE TWO: RENEWALS

- ELE is also used at renewal for children certified using the new ELE process and for those certified through other avenues.
- For the ELE children at renewal, a file will be submitted to DCFS to determine if the children remain active in SNAP. Medicaid coverage will be extended automatically for 12 months for those who do remain active.



WHY SNAP?

- DHH selected DCFS/SNAP as the first Express Lane Agency based on the following factors:
 - Highest percentage of uninsured Louisiana children live in households with incomes between 50%-100% of FPL (and eligible for SNAP);
 - The high SNAP participation rate in Louisiana;
 - Existing and compatible information technology systems between the two departments; and
 - Similar eligibility requirements.



- What was the result of ELE?

Approximately 20,000 children have been enrolled using ELE.

- Was ELE Implementation Difficult?

YES

But it was worth the struggle!



WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

- Time
 - ELE is very time consuming. For 18 months, staff members from all eligibility sections have met twice a month or more to work on issues related to implementation.
 - Drafting and disseminating the necessary policy changes and training materials has also consumed much staff time.
- Major Systems Changes
 - 3,089 hours of work have been performed by our Medicaid eligibility system contractor.
 - Countless hours of internal staff time were expended working with the contractor, testing the changes, and implementing the changes.



WHAT IS NEXT IN ELE FOR LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN ?

Louisiana is looking to add language to our state tax returns that would allow parents to opt for their children being enrolled in Medicaid if their income falls within the appropriate parameters.



QUESTIONS?

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