



DANE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



Welcome!

- AGENDA
 - What is unwinding and why does it matter?
 - Major implications for our community
 - FoodShare (FS) unwinding plans
 - Medicaid (MA) unwinding plans
 - What still remains in flux (as of March 3, 2023)
 - How state and local agencies are preparing
 - What you can do to help
 - Housing information and resources
 - Recap: KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF



DANE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

COVID-19 Unwinding



What is unwinding and why does it matter?

- During the pandemic, many requirements normally needed to maintain eligibility for Medicaid were suspended in order to provide access continuity for health care.
- Also during the pandemic, extra FoodShare benefits (averaging generally hundreds of dollars per month) were added for all active households.
- Under recent federal law, many of these temporary health care policies that have been in place during the pandemic will be rolled back, or "unwound."
- Different policies will be unwound on different timelines based on federal law and guidance.
- Also, how the policies will be unwound depends on if they are an existing case or a new applicant. Generally new applicants will return to old rules faster.
- Policies and processes governing the unwinding are being created and communicated in real-time, everyone needs to have patience as things are clarified.



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COVID-19 Unwinding



Major implications for our community

- The Capital Consortia (includes Dane County as well as Sauk, Richland, Juneau, Adams, Dodge, Columbia and Sheboygan) added 30,000 cases during the pandemic (from 85,000 to over 115,000). The benefit caseload is as high as it has ever been.
- Workload for the Capital Consortia will be the highest it's ever been for a full year during the unwinding period.
- The first three to four months of unwinding will be **incredibly difficult** for customers (multiple letters, long waits for the call center, lots of lobby traffic, likely *thousands* of angry, confused, disappointed customers)
- Community impact will be deep and pervasive.
 - Many people are likely to lose Medicaid and need to get healthcare through HealthCare.gov and/or face increased food insecurity.
 - There will be provider and customer frustration for people seeking MA-funded services like behavioral health.



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COVID-19 Unwinding



Major implications for our community

FoodShare unwinding plans:

- Emergency Allotments are extra benefits FoodShare members had been receiving during the COVID-19 pandemic to help buy food.
- The extra benefit amount was the difference between a household's allotment and the maximum allotment for their household size, or \$95, whichever was more.
- Starting in March 2023, members will receive only their regular FoodShare benefits.
- The state raised awareness among members via direct notification and a social media campaign.
 - Letter mailed to all FoodShare members starting mid-January
 - Emails sent to all FoodShare members with an email address late January
 - Posts on Facebook, Twitter, and NextDoor
- People can request a fair hearing tied to their emergency allotment ending, but the scope of the hearing will be limited to ensuring their regular FoodShare amount is accurate.



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COVID-19 Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Foodshare unwinding plans:

- The Biden Administration recently announced May 11th as the official end-date of the public health emergency (PHE). The PHE date still impacts several policies for FoodShare, which return to “old rules” the month after the PHE ends.
- Drug testing requirements for individuals convicted of a drug related felony: New applicants as of June 12th will have old rules apply. If there is a felony conviction, will need to take and pass a test.
- Existing FoodShare members will have drug testing requirements re-applied when they go through a renewal.
- Temporary student eligibility exemptions for FoodShare that had been in place because of COVID-19 will also cease for new applicants as of June 12th.
 - Having an estimated family contribution of \$0
 - Being eligible to participate in state or federally funded work study
- Existing members will have these pandemic extensions rolled back at the time of their renewal.



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COVID-19 Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

- People who were health care members on or after March 18, 2020 through March 31, 2023, will maintain continuous health care eligibility until a full redetermination of eligibility occurs after April 1, 2023.
- Members whose health care applications are received on or after April 1, 2023, will not qualify for continuous eligibility. Their eligibility will be determined/maintained using regular program policies.
- Health care renewal dates have been distributed over a 12-month period, from June 2023 through May 2024.
 - The Capital Consortium expects to have about 10,000 renewals/month.
- Renewal dates for all health care assistance groups will be aligned on a case. For cases that have FoodShare or Wisconsin Shares Child Care in addition to health care, the health care renewal date will be aligned with the FoodShare or Child Care renewal date, when possible, to reduce the renewal burden on members.
- Members may want to voluntarily complete an early renewal. We will strongly encourage members to wait until they receive their renewal packet about 45 days before it is due.
- Members who renew earlier than their scheduled renewal month could lose coverage sooner than they would if they wait until their scheduled renewal date. If an early renewal results in a closure or reduction in benefits, the member cannot change their mind and “un-renew.”



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Public Health Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

- All healthcare members will get a one-time letter telling them the assigned renewal date for their household.
 - DHS will be mailing approximately 900,000 letters throughout the month of March. Members should expect to receive them in mid-March through early April.
 - A copy of this letter will be available in members' ACCESS accounts on March 6.
 - Capital expects to have about 120,000 members receive this letter.
 - *It is critical that members read and keep this letter for their reference.*
- Official renewal packets will get mailed about 45 days before renewal is due (regular practice).
- Members will also get emailed/texted during the renewal process.
 - ~90 days before their renewal date, members will be reminded to update their addresses to make sure they get their renewal packet in the mail
 - ~40 days before their renewal date, members will be reminded to renew to reinforce the renewal packet.



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Public Health Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

- Some members must reapply by May 31, 2023, to have their eligibility re-determined. These members have had their continuous eligibility manually extended in interChange (ForwardHealth) and must reapply to have their eligibility determined through the CARES system.
- About 12,000 cases in Capital will be sent a letter in mid-April that they will need to reapply by May 31st.



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Public Health Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

Some other segments of specific MA populations will get handled differently but that will be reflected in their notice as the chart below indicates. A few will need to reapply in order to maintain coverage. *The figures below are statewide numbers.

Emergency Services Medicaid	1,600	June 2023 through August 2023	Need to complete a renewal
Tuberculosis-Related Medicaid	100	June 2023 through August 2023	Need to complete a renewal
Met Deductibles	960	June 2023 through August 2023	Need to reapply
SSI Medicaid	8,390	September 2023 through March 2024	*Ex-Parte/Need to reapply
Gap Filling	370	March 2024	Need to reapply
Foster Care Medicaid, Adoption Assistance, Subsidized Guardianship	1,702	April – May 2024	Need to reapply



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Public Health Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

- Children enrolled in BadgerCare Plus, childless adults enrolled in BadgerCare Plus, and adults enrolled in Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) have not been subject to premium policies during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- New applicants will be subject to premium policies starting January 1, 2024.
- Premiums will not apply to existing members until they go through a renewal at some point after January 2024.
- Reinstating other non-financial elements of healthcare eligibility such as the MAPP work requirement and the Treatment Needs Question will also be delayed until January 2024.



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Public Health Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

Some members who need to have their citizenship, identity, or immigration status verified will get a one-time letter in March reminding them that they will need to provide the needed information or re-apply by the end of May (or they will close at the end of May). Capital expects to have less than 300 members affected.

- During the weeks of March 13 and March 20, letters will be sent to impacted members.
- Capital Consortium staff will be making outbound outreach calls to affected members to encourage them to provide the needed information before their case closes at the end of May.
- We've also working with our own internal partners (Immigration Affairs, JFF offices) to help educate the community.



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Public Health Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

- Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, states are required to demonstrate that they have made a good-faith effort to get updated contact information from members.
- States must also contact members through more than one method of communication when they get returned mail without a forwarding address.
- This likely means that outbound calls will be required for healthcare cases if we don't have a good mailing address.
- This will increase workload for the Capital Consortium and also potentially confuse members.
- **It is critically important that we get up-to-date mailing addresses for as many members as possible.**



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Public Health Unwinding



Major implications for our community

Healthcare unwinding plans:

- HealthCare.gov will be providing a special enrollment period for a full year for people who lose Medicaid coverage. This will be attestation-based on the member's part. The enrollment period will be from March 2023 through July 2024.
- There will also be a corresponding *Medicare* open enrollment for six months for cases when Medicare members lose eligibility outside the Medicare open enrollment time period.
- Capital Consortium Staff will be explaining these open enrollment periods to members who are losing coverage after trying to renew so as few people as possible lose access to health care coverage.
- Speed of action matters to avoid a gap in coverage as HealthCare.gov can only start new coverage the month *after* a person applies.



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Public Health Unwinding



What still remains in flux

- FoodShare
 - We expect changes to the drug testing policies affecting members but the timing is TBD.
 - The Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) suspension of time-limited benefits for FoodShare eligibility remains in place.
 - There is likely no work requirement for FoodShare until later this Summer/Fall.
 - The FoodShare Employment and Training program is still available and has capacity.
- Health Care
 - Policies related to overpayments for healthcare are unclear at this time.
- The State Biennial Budget for 2023-2025 may potentially impact these policies. The Evers Administration has proposed eliminating work requirements and drug testing entirely.



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Public Health Unwinding



How state and local agencies are preparing

- State DHS PHE Unwinding Taskforce and Stakeholder calls.
- Register for the DMS-Medicaid Unwinding Communications listserv at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDHS/subscriber/new?topic_id=WIDHS_668.
- Partner Toolkit: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/unwindingtoolkit.htm>
- DHS member-facing web page: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/forwardhealth-medicaid.htm>
- Text messaging, emails and state social media are being heavily used and promoted.
- Promoting ACCESS (<https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/>) is critical. Over 300K new users!
- New tools to promote reporting of medical expenses to help some FoodShare members (over 60, blind and/or disabled) know that they qualify for higher benefit amounts.
- New tools to help MCOs track their members status and help to do outreach.
- Many materials available in English, Spanish and Hmong
- Please send questions to DHSForwardHealthPartners@dhs.wisconsin.gov.



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How state and local agencies are preparing

- Preparing staff for the workload increase:
 - Mental health first aid
 - Extra security at the Job Center
 - Refresher trainings
 - Projecting workload—normal call volume about 22,000 calls a month in 2022, potential for 30,000 a month or more in 2023-2024?
 - Securing additional resources for overtime
 - Preparing for new service elements in our call center—"call back" feature
- New social media outlets—see DCDHS new Facebook and Instagram pages, follow and suggest members do as well. Capital Consortium intends to use these aggressively.
- 18 contracts with Dane County food pantries finalized in February 2023 (\$2 million in additional assistance). This caps off many supplements to food agencies since the start of the pandemic.
- Stakeholder outreach such as this webinar, discussions with partners, the ADRC and HealthWatch.



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What you can do to help

- Encourage people you work with to:
 - Read carefully and keep letters from the state about their benefits.
 - Sign up for and use the MyACCESS mobile app!!
 - Report address changes to the Capital Consortium immediately so we have good contact information...ideally through MyACCESS.
- Share and encourage sharing good information about unwinding—refer to DCDHS Facebook and Instagram updates.
- Help people find food support resources: <https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/resources.htm>
- Encourage people to sign up for coverage at HealthCare.gov if they lose their state Medicaid coverage.
- Spread the word that these are legit:
 - Texts will come from 94347 (WI DHS).
 - Emails will come from dhs@info.wi.gov.
 - Calls will come from staff identifying themselves as calling from the “Capital Consortium.”
 - If in doubt, members should call us back at 888-794-5556.



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What you can do to help

- Be patient with the Capital Consortium.
 - “Best times to call” are **not** on Mondays or over the lunch hour.
 - Help members find and keep critical documents like pay stubs.
 - Urge members to read notices first *before* calling. Help members to understand notices when you can.
 - Encourage people to wait for their official renewal packet before calling. This will come 45-days before the renewal date that they can see in their ACCESS account or in the letter they get in March/April 2023.
- Refer back to this powerpoint to help people find available resources.
- Be mindful of the impact of these changes on our members well-being—practice trauma-informed communication techniques.



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Housing Information and Resources

- Dane County Homeless Services Consortium (HSC)
 - Services broken down by target population: <https://www.danecountyhomeless.org/get-help>
 - Includes how to access shelter, housing programs, housing lists, etc.
 - Also has helpful data specific to our community.
- Emergency rental assistance (ERA) or Dane CORE 2.0 Application:
 - www.danecore.org
 - Federally-funded rental assistance for people with rental arrears, or those experiencing homelessness in need of security deposits.
 - Assistance is capped at 18 months of total lifetime assistance.



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Housing Information and Resources

- Energy Services (ESI)
 - Utility payment assistance for limited income families.
 - Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool
 - Heat & Housing for Heroes
 - Links families with the resources to help them meet their basic survival needs
 - <http://www.esiwi.com/>
- Emergency Assistance (EA) Grants
 - Families with limited resources that have not received an Emergency Assistance grant already in the last 12 months can qualify for Emergency Assistance if:
 - There is at least one minor dependent in the home
 - They have a 5-day eviction notice for non-payment of rent, or the household is currently homeless and has found new housing to move into
 - The group has less than \$2,500 in assets
 - The household has less than 115% FPL of monthly gross income (before taxes are taken out)
 - **Please call 608-242-7458** to verify eligibility before beginning the application process.



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KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

- February is the last month of FoodShare emergency allotments—Capital Consortium staff are unable to grant additional benefits due to federal law. The federal government ended this program, not the State of Wisconsin.
- March 31st is the last day to apply for Medicaid and be subject to the continuous coverage policies.
- All members with Medicaid will have to renew or reapply (in limited cases) to maintain coverage at some point during the unwinding year. (Reapplications will be due by the end of May.)
- Member should not renew until their assigned renewal date. Their date can be found in their ACCESS account and in the letter they receive sometime in March or early April. The earliest renewal date is June 30, 2023.
- Key dates and actions to take will be communicated in writing. Notices are important.
- Other forms of outreach are happening as much as possible.
- Information about unwinding is still becoming clear—stay informed through social media.
- The Capital Consortium is here to serve and wants to help people maintain access to services, but we need the community's help during this challenging time.



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Thank you!!