



FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT

The Public Health Emergency (PHE) and Extended Medicaid Coverage: *What will happen to former foster care children who turned 26 after the PHE began?*

Background: During the national COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), which began in March 2020 and is still on-going, almost no one on Medicaid can lose coverage. Thus, many Medicaid beneficiaries who are no longer technically eligible have stayed covered. However, after the federal government declares that the PHE has ended, Florida will begin returning to normal Medicaid redeterminations and eligibility rules. At that time, beneficiaries who are no longer eligible for Medicaid *under any coverage category* will lose Medicaid.

Medicaid eligibility for former foster care children: Under normal Medicaid rules, children who were in foster care and enrolled in Medicaid when they turned 18 (or “aged out”) of foster care while living in Florida are eligible for Medicaid until they turn 26.

For example, Sandra, a former Florida foster care child was enrolled in Medicaid in March 2020. She turned 26 in April 2020. Although she has been technically ineligible for Medicaid coverage as a former foster care child since April 2020, she remains covered by Medicaid under the PHE’s extended Medicaid provision.

When the public health emergency ends, what will happen to former foster care children who turned 26 after March 2020? The Department of Children and Families (DCF) will determine if the individual is *eligible for a different type of Medicaid*. When someone loses Medicaid eligibility under their current type of coverage, they may be eligible for another type of coverage.

Sandra, for example, will lose her eligibility for Medicaid as a former foster child, but she might be eligible for ongoing Medicaid coverage if she is pregnant, disabled, or a low income parent.

Additionally, many former foster youth who are now age 26 (or older) and working will be eligible for subsidies in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace. Local “navigators” are available to help people understand their options and enroll in a new low cost health care plan. Click [here](#) in order to find contact information for local navigator programs administered by [Covering Florida](#).

What are some things former foster care youth can do before the PHE ends?

- If you are disabled: apply for benefits with the Social Security Administration as soon as possible. [Here](#) is information on how to apply.
- If possible, create an online account with DCF [here](#), and report all your information, including if you are pregnant, disabled, or a parent. You should also make sure your address on file is up-to-date with DCF and your managed care plan.
- You might be eligible for insurance in the federal ACA Marketplace. (“Obamacare”). Contact your local navigator program for help. Click [here](#) in order to find contact information for local navigator programs administered by [Covering Florida](#).
- Medicaid is complicated! The Florida Health Justice Project will be providing updated information about what happens regarding Medicaid eligibility after the PHE ends. Please check our [PHE and Extended Medicaid web page](#) for updates.

For questions, please contact [Miriam Harmatz, Katy DeBriere](#)

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