

Effective Strategies to Collect Address Changes from Medicaid Beneficiaries via State Websites



QUESTION:

What are some of the best practices for state websites to effectively communicate to Medicaid recipients to send address changes in the context of the end of the public health emergency (PHE)?

» SHORT ANSWER:

There are several key elements a state or county agency website could include for clear, concise, effective communication to their Medicaid population to collect a client’s most up-to-date household address.

These include:

- clear pathways to take action;
- simple explanations;
- providing instructions in multiple languages; and
- providing external communication toolkits for consistent messaging.

I. BEST PRACTICES

What are some best practices and examples of websites from other states?

Provide multiple avenues for clients to update their address

- By providing Medicaid beneficiaries with multiple pathways to take action, clients can choose the method that will be easiest for them. States are providing many pathways for clients to make changes including online, through an account portal, smartphone application, phone, fax, in person at a county office, email, through the mail, or through their managed care organization (MCO).
- Make each of these options clear by having a consistently formatted list to create a visually easy-to-follow menu of options.
- For each option, provide a functioning hyperlink to webpages, portals, applications, phone numbers or addresses on a map to streamline the user experience.
- Consider adding public transportation options next to county office addresses.

» When increasing communications to Medicaid enrollees, consider staggering outreach or leading enrollees towards self-service options to control flow of incoming calls to call centers

- Example: **Rhode Island** (<https://eohhs.ri.gov/initiatives/medicaid-and-end-covid-19-public-health-emergency>), and **Massachusetts** (<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-changes-in-your-information-to-masshealth-for-seniors-and-people-of-any-age-who-need-long-term-care-services>)

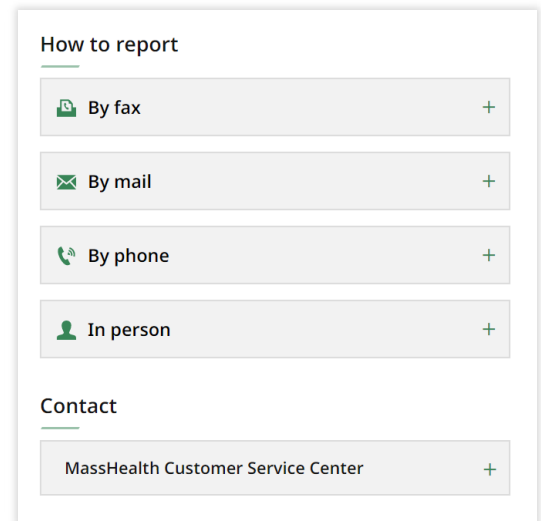


Figure 1: Massachusetts’ website offers a clear, consistent list of ways clients can update their information or report a change. Retrieved on 9/2/2022

Keep information concise and put pathways to update addresses at the top

- With so much information surrounding the public health emergency (PHE), putting the call to action visually first will help users complete the action.
- Get into more specifics in a frequently asked questions (FAQs) section or include background information towards the bottom of the page.
- Example: **Arizona** (https://www.azahcccs.gov/AHCCCS/AboutUs/Return_to_Normal.html)

Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra has formally extended the Public Health Emergency (PHE) through October 12, 2022. The Biden administration has indicated it will provide a 60-day notice period before any end to the PHE.

Preparing for the End of COVID-19: Return to Normal Renewals

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the federal government declared a public health emergency (PHE). For the duration of the PHE, states are required to continue health care coverage for all medical assistance programs, even if a member's eligibility changes.

AHCCCS will soon return to normal Medicaid enrollment and renewal processes. We're working with community partners, advocates and members to make sure eligible Arizonans are able to continue receiving high quality health care coverage.

We need your help to meet this goal.

You can help our members take steps to get ready now. To ensure that members do not experience any gap in health care coverage, AHCCCS asks all members to:

1. Ensure that their mailing address, phone number, and email address on file is correct in www.healtharizonaplus.gov, or by calling Health-e-Arizona Plus at 1-855-HEA-PLUS (1-855-432-7587), Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Review the [Updating Your Contact Information](#) flyer to learn how to update your contact information in Health-e-Arizona PLUS.
2. Check their mailbox for a letter from AHCCCS about renewal of coverage.
3. Respond to any requests from AHCCCS for more information so the agency can accurately determine eligibility.

For more help, members may contact their health plan or a community assistor organization. There are several community assistor organizations who can help individuals navigate the Medicaid or CHIP (the Children's Health Insurance Program, called KidsCare in Arizona) renewal process. Health plan member services departments can assist as well. AHCCCS members can find the number for their health plan's members services department on their member ID card or on the AHCCCS Available Health Plans web page.

After the end of the federal public health emergency, individuals who no longer qualify for AHCCCS or KidsCare may have other health care coverage options through the Health Care Marketplace. See HealthCare.gov or call the Marketplace Call Center at 1-800-318-2596 (TTY: 1-855-889-4325).

Figure 2 (right): Arizona's webpage provides a succinct summary of the unwinding with clear ways to take action at the top. Retrieved on 9/2/2022

Improve accessibility by providing information in multiple languages and for people with disabilities

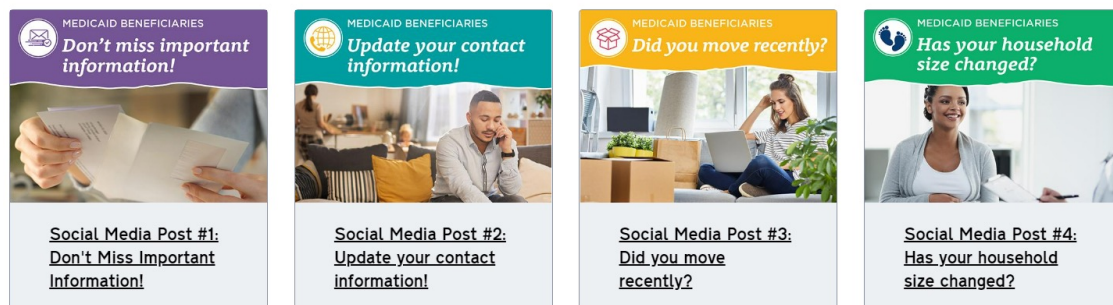
- Including instructions for updating addresses in multiple languages on a state agency website can help reach more Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Consider leveraging language preference data from MCOs or Census data to provide translations in the most common languages besides English for your state.
- Ensure your website meets standards for disability access, including accessible to screen readers.
- Example: **Colorado** (<https://www.healthfirstcolorado.com/uya/>)

Create public facing communication tools with disabilities

- Consider that other entities, such as community-based organizations (CBOs) or MCOs, might be communicating to their constituents to make address updates to maintain coverage. Help create consistent and accurate information across these entities by publishing similar communication tools.
- In communication tools, consider providing multiple formats including posters, social media graphics, and example outreach letters.
- Example: **Arizona** (https://www.azahcccs.gov/AHCCCS/AboutUs/Return_to_Normal.html), **North Carolina** (<https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/End-of-PHE-Toolkit>), and **Arkansas** (<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/divisions-shared-services/medical-services/update-arkansas-2/0>)

Download Communication Tools Below

Social media images below are for your convenience in downloading graphics in English or Spanish sized for posting on multiple social media platforms. Other tools in the Toolkit are also available for download.



The figure displays four social media graphics arranged in a row. Each graphic has a header with the text 'MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES' and a specific call to action. Below each graphic is a caption identifying it as a social media post.

- Social Media Post #1:** Don't Miss Important Information! (Purple header, image of hands holding a document)
- Social Media Post #2:** Update your contact information! (Teal header, image of a man on a phone)
- Social Media Post #3:** Did you move recently? (Yellow header, image of a woman at a laptop)
- Social Media Post #4:** Has your household size changed? (Green header, image of a woman smiling)

Figure 3: Downloadable social media graphics from North Carolina. Retrieved on 9/2/2022

Ensure your website is mobile friendly

- More than a quarter of adults who earn less than \$30,000 a year have a smartphone but not broadband at home.¹ For those that rely on their phones as the primary means of accessing the internet, mobile friendly webpages will reduce barriers to navigating information and ways of taking action to update addresses.
- Example: **Texas** (<https://yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home>)

Consider creating a short URL

- A short, easy to remember URL that redirects to the state address change page can be useful in communication campaigns and to make it easier spread the word.
- Example: yourtexasbenefits.com (**Texas**), ar.gov/update (**Arkansas**)

Use the address change landing page to establish credibility

- Fraud attempts that impersonate government agencies to collect people's personal information pose a real threat, and people are cognizant of fraud attempts. If the agency is noting on their website that they will be mailing renewals at the end of the PHE, share some clear signs that show Medicaid recipients the letter is legitimate, and inform them of ways they can protect themselves against fraud. Indicators of legitimate texts can include the agency name, opt-out language, and the purpose of the text.



National Academy for State Health Policy shares additional state examples in their brief "[Unwinding Medicaid's Continuous Coverage Requirement: State Communication Strategies](#)"

II. CONSIDERATIONS

Review the following checklist for your agency's website:

- Is there one consistent link for Medicaid beneficiaries to take action to update their addresses?
- Is the information on how to take action to update household addresses hidden behind a member portal? Can beneficiaries still update their address if they don't have a login, or have forgotten their login information?
- Is the information buried under multiple page clicks, and does the page live in an intuitive section of the website sitemap?
- How many languages are the instructions available in?
- Is the agency website mobile friendly?
- Does the website have accessibility features such as keyboard only navigation, alternative text on images, video transcription or captions, or easy to read text?
- Are the instructions easy to read and the information concise?
- Does the user need to scroll to the bottom of the page to find out how to they can take action?
- Are there multiple avenues for Medicaid beneficiaries to make an address update to their profile?
- Has the agency made considerations for staff capacity, especially in call centers, to account for any increases in incoming requests?

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¹ Pew Research Center. Mobile Fact Sheet (April 7, 2021).