

History of Newborn Application Processing

Any baby born to a Medicaid eligible mother is eligible for twelve months of continuous Medicaid coverage in the Newborn Medicaid eligibility category. This category existed prior to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, but the ACA made significant changes in how eligibility is processed for Newborns and their mothers. Beginning in January 2015, defects and delays in the IBM Curam system created significant problems with the Newborn eligibility process, which in turn adversely impacted medical providers serving these children. There are currently 16,823 Newborns enrolled in coverage. On average, about 1,500 babies are added to Newborn coverage each month. DHS caseworkers are processing lists submitted by providers with 4,045 children – some are new applications, some of these are awaiting coverage, while others are currently covered but a coverage gap or other defect in their case must be corrected to allow for complete billing. Because coverage gaps or other case defects may not be discovered by a provider until months later, there are cases from throughout 2015 waiting to be processed. Some cases are worked in minutes, while others require more time, depending on the complexities of the entire household's eligibility information.

Challenges since the Affordable Care Act Implementation

- Under the ACA, beneficiaries and providers must submit more information to process eligibility for Medicaid eligible mothers and their Newborn children than before the ACA.
- The Curam system originally shipped with a defect that created coverage gaps, requiring a manual work around by caseworkers.
- Functionality needed in the Curam System to process Newborn coverage was delayed beyond the original timelines.
- These delays in Curam System functionality created a backlog of casework, and Curam lacked the ability to prioritize Newborn cases from other changes in the system.

Mitigation Strategies

- DHS worked with the Arkansas Medical Society to develop a process for providers to identify outstanding claims on Newborns, so that the cases could be prioritized for processing.
- Caseworkers used manual work arounds to make Newborns eligible until the Curam System defect was corrected.

Permanent Resolution

- IBM developed a fix for the Curam Newborn defect and deployed it to production in October 2015. This means that Newborn coverage now starts correctly at the date of birth.
- DHS vendors developed a fix for Curam in January 2016 so that Newborn cases are now separated from all other changes so that they can be given priority for processing.

Newborn Processing Timeline

