



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

john.k.hoffman@illinois.gov (HFS)

meghan.powers@illinois.gov (DHS)

**State Agencies Prepare Aggressive Hiring Effort
to Resolve Medicaid Backlog**

Accelerated Frontline Hiring Initiative to build on efforts
already underway to overcome delays

Springfield, Ill. – Advancing Governor Pritzker’s commitment to quality and affordable health care for all Illinoisans, key state agencies are taking aggressive action to fill vacancies and hire hundreds of frontline staff in order to continue reducing major Medicaid backlogs.

The focus for new staff will be primarily to drive down long-existing delays of the Medicaid application and renewal processes, according to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The hiring initiative comes amidst an aggressive cross-agency effort that has already reduced the backlog by tens of thousands of applications and eliminated the backlog of newborns being added to their mothers’ Medicaid cases.

“The governor has directed us to work together across our agencies to solve these obstacles to care with urgency,” said Theresa Eagleson, Director of HFS. “Those entitled to Medicaid deserve exceptional service and full transparency, which we are dedicated to providing.”

Staff will be brought on and trained more quickly than typical, with the first positions expected to be filled this week, and hundreds more to follow. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply for the positions at work.illinois.gov.

“These problems built up through a lack of resources and prioritization, and it is long past time for them to be resolved,” said Grace Hou, Secretary of DHS. “Working together, we are moving quickly to ensure people get the care they deserve.”

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Backlogs of initial Medicaid applications and of re-determinations, a federally required renewal process, have increased in recent years. Backlogs are defined as delays of 45 days or more for initial applications and 60 days or more for renewals.

Training and technical experts to support the new frontline staff are included in the hiring initiative, which is focused on filling additional Human Service Caseworker and Social Service Career Trainee positions.

In addition to the hiring initiative, the responsible departments began reducing backlogs in the first months of Governor Pritzker's tenure. This work includes overhauling inefficient policies, creating transparent progress reports, and collaborating on IT improvements and business process reviews. Earlier this year, HFS also hired an experienced deputy director whose initial charge is to eliminate impediments in the state's eligibility process.

A recently passed bipartisan Medicaid reform bill, SB 1321, also includes provisions to advance these goals. The goal of these strategies is to have a significant reduction of backlogs in 2020.

This initiative was made possible through collaboration with the Illinois Department of Central Management Services and the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology.

While the process for these hires has been accelerated, CMS' Bureau of Personnel and other departments involved are ensuring that all appropriate laws, rules, and contracts are being followed. The agencies are equal opportunity employers and as such encourage people of all backgrounds to apply for these positions.