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CHICAGO – Medicaid clients in Cook and the surrounding counties now have the opportunity to choose their health plans and get better access to quality healthcare, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services officials said Thursday.

Clients in the Chicagoland region have begun receiving initial enrollment packets from HFS as part of Illinois Medicaid’s shift to coordinated care. The packets include an instructional letter and “Your Health Plan Choices,” a listing and description of every Health Plan offered in the area near the client’s residence. They also include instructions outlining how to enroll online or by phone.

The Health Plans will give a client a “health home” that provides clients with a primary care physician and access to any specialists needed. This will replace the traditional system in which clients had to find their own doctor who was willing to accept Medicaid.

“This change should give our clients the chance to get and stay healthier,” said HFS Director Julie Hamos. “It’s the most important part of our ‘Triple Aim’ – to improve clients’ quality of care, improve client health and control the growth of healthcare costs. Healthier people make for a healthier Illinois.”

Clients will have 60 days after receiving the packets to choose a Health Plan and a Primary Care Provider (PCP) for their care coordination services. If a client does not select a Health Plan within 30 days, a second enrollment packet will be mailed. Clients will have an additional 30 days from that point to choose a Health Plan. If clients do not choose a Health Plan, one will be automatically assigned to them based on their geographic area.

Once clients have selected or been assigned to a Health Plan, they have 90 days to change their Health Plan once. After that period, they are “locked in,” or required to remain with the Health Plan for one year, as long as they otherwise remain eligible for Medicaid or All Kids. After one year in a Health Plan, clients can change Health Plans or stay with their current plan.

Clients should enroll in coordinated care by visiting the HFS Illinois Client Enrollment Services website at <http://enrollhfs.illinois.gov/node/46> or by calling Client Enrollment Services (CES) at 1-877-912-8880 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, or from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. The Client Enrollment Broker (CEB) is a neutral party not associated with any specific Health Plan who can educate clients and help them make a choice.

