

ACHHS

Financial Services



COVID-19 Response

	The Questions
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3/20/20: Governor Walz signed Emergency Executive Order 20-12 3/27/20 The President signs Federal CARES Act
What is the purpose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waivers and modifications to allow HHS partners to continue to provide essential programs & services to Minnesotans safely & without undue delay during the peacetime emergency.
Who will this affect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any person who is receiving Medical Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Cash Assistance Program as of 3/20/20 Child Care Providers whose income is affected by COVID-19
The Changes (well, the major changes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delay of renewals, recertifications and report forms for all programs at least through 6/30/20 No face to face interviews, phone interview is accepted for all programs Accept verbal signatures for applications, releases and verifications for some programs No reduction or closure of Cash Assistance benefits for any reason except excess income Reporting of changes is not required for some programs Cases remain subject to fraud for all programs, this has not changed
Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent Day limit of 25 days has been exempted through 6/30/20, which allows payment to the provider when child is absent Payment to alternative providers if the primary provider closes due to COVID-19 Delay in provider recertifications
Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare recipients will NOT be closed for any reason during the Public Health Emergency unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested closure Move out of state Death
New Programs and Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Assistance for COVID-19 Testing for Uninsured Individuals became effective as of 5/1/20, an application can be picked up at a clinic or with a provider. Emergency SNAP (E-SNAP): Anyone who received SNAP in March and April were issued the maximum benefit for their household size Pandemic SNAP (P-EBT): Children who received free and reduced meals at school are eligible for this supplemental food purchasing benefit. DHS will be administering this program in tandem with MN Dept of Education OPP-Online Purchasing Program for SNAP only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazon on 5/27/20 Wal-Mart on 5/28/20 Does not pay for delivery fees or non-food items Cannot use cash assistance benefits online

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Pandemic Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Federal CARES Act Stimulus Payments are not counted as income for any Public Assistance Program • The additional \$600/week Pandemic Unemployment Assurance (PUA) is counted for all programs except Health Care Programs • Lake & Pines receive additional Energy Assistance Funds to help individuals who are at risk of losing their energy source due to non-payment • The governor suspended all evictions
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How are we navigating these changes?

Doors are closed but we are doing business:

- Can take applications and signatures verbally in addition to drop off, mail, fax, email and online at ApplyMN or MNSure.org
- All interviews are done over the phone at this time.
- Verification can be emailed, faxed, dropped in the drop box outside our doors
- Some verifications can be verbally attested for Cash Assistance Programs. Fraud still applies.
- There is a file cabinet outside our doors if a person wants to pick an app up
- There is a phone outside that calls the front desk only

April 2020: We received information from DHS in regards to the action we must take to implement the Federal CARES Act and the Executive Order 20-12.

Financial Services has been navigating daily emails and announcements along with weekly/monthly conference calls with DHS regarding updates and changes to processes for all programs. Reviewing these changes and updates has been a huge addition to the work being done.

We are currently working through the following updates:

- Version 7 of our Q&As for Cash and SNAP Programs
- Version 2 of the Worker Guide for Cash and SNAP Programs
- Version 2 of the Q&A for the Child Care Program

Changes daily to our health care programs with two sets of instructions for the two different databases we utilize.

For the month of June, several households are closing on SNAP and Cash Assistance Programs due to the Pandemic Unemployment Assurance (PUA) (\$600/week in addition to regular unemployment insurance).

I anticipate an increase in SNAP & Cash Assistance Applications when individuals return to work and lose the PUA.

I anticipate an increase in Health Care applications if businesses close permanently or lay employees off permanently.

How do we "catch-up" with the annual renewals for all program areas? This is a question I have asked DHS to begin work on. As of 5/20/20 the SNAP and Cash Assistance Division reported they are developing a workgroup to start this planning.

The team is required to track any change we are unable to act on at this time to address in the future. As of 5/20/20 the changes add up to 173.

Future plans include continuing to adapt and navigate the changes that occur due to this pandemic, to reach out to our consumers and assure service delivery in a timely manner and to assure the safety and health of our employees.