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Medicaid Managed Care: Basic Facts

WHAT IS MEDICAID MANAGED CARE?

Medicaid Managed Care is a program by which recipients of Medicaid can choose to receive medical care from a number of available health plans, known as HMOs (Health Maintenance Organizations). When you enroll in an HMO, you typically choose a doctor to be your “primary care physician”. This doctor will then refer you to other doctors and specialists as you need them. When you’re enrolled in an HMO, you usually must receive all your medical care from providers associated with that HMO, or in what they call their “network”.

DO I HAVE TO JOIN A MEDICAID MANAGED HEALTH PLAN IF I RECEIVE MEDICAID?

Most Medicaid recipients must join a Medicaid Managed Care plan. Unless you have an exemption or are excluded from Medicaid managed care, you will be required to select a managed care plan. See MFY Fact Sheet – What Do I Need to Know about Enrolling in Medicaid Managed Care?

WHO HAS AN EXEMPTION FROM MANAGED CARE?

New York City exempts and excludes a number of groups from the Medicaid Managed Care enrollment requirement. Members of the following groups may decide not to join a managed care plan (but you still can if you want to):

- HIV+ individuals;
- Pregnant women who currently receive prenatal care from a provider who doesn’t participate in any Medicaid managed care plan;
- Homeless individuals;
- Individuals who cannot be served by a managed care plan because of a language barrier;
- Individuals who are eligible for the Medicaid Buy-in Program for Working People with Disabilities and are not required to pay a premium;
- Individuals who are residents of Alcohol/Substance Abuse Long Term Residential Treatment Programs;
- Individuals who receive both Medicaid and Medicare (Dual Eligibles); or
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions who have been actively treated for at least six months by a sub-specialist who is not a network provider for any Medicaid Managed Care Plan in the service area.

WILL MY BENEFITS BE DIFFERENT WITH MEDICAID MANAGED CARE?

Generally, no. A Medicaid Managed Care Plan entitles you to the same benefits as those received from Medicaid Fee-for-Service (traditional Medicaid). You will pick a doctor, and that doctor will be responsible for referring you to other doctors within the plan’s network if additional care is needed.

WHAT DOES NEW YORK MEDICAID CHOICE DO?

New York Medicaid CHOICE is a program that the state has set up to help people enroll in Medicaid managed care in New York City. Its toll-free phone number is 1-800-505-5678. New York Medicaid CHOICE can enroll you in a managed care program, advise you about managed care, answer your questions, process transfers and collect complaints.