



Date: October 20, 2008

General questions: Jim Sellers 503 945-5738

Technical questions: Karen House 503 945-6254

Oct. 23 is deadline to return OHP-Standard applications mailed in September

Thursday is the deadline for low-income Oregonians who received applications in September for the Oregon Health Plan's Standard benefit package to return them to the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Applications may be returned to the DHS health plan office in Salem or may be submitted to any DHS field office. People who have questions or need assistance may call 1-800-699-9075.

"Some 7,045 low-income Oregonians who have returned OHP-Standard applications have been found eligible for medical coverage," says Jim Edge, state Medicaid director in DHS. "We encourage people to return the application by the deadline even if they have not yet obtained the required income or citizenship documents."

Edge says DHS will hold applications and wait for required documents if applicants are making a good-faith effort to obtain them. At no expense to the applicant, he says, the state will look up birth certificates for people born in Oregon.

OHP-Standard now covers more than 27,200 people in a program designed to provide health care coverage to low-income adults who do not qualify for traditional Medicaid. DHS has mailed 30,000 applications since March 5 to people whose names a state computer randomly drew from a reservation list that attracted 91,000-plus names last winter.

The deadline for returning the final round of applications mailed Oct. 7 will be Nov. 24.

The OHP-Standard budget is supported by taxes on Medicaid managed care plans and large hospitals, federal matching funds and client premiums. The budget will support a monthly average of 24,000 adults during the two-year budget period that ends June 30, 2009. Because fewer than 24,000 were covered during the first half of the biennium, more than that can be covered during the second half.

More than 17,900 OHP-Standard applications have been returned so far. The most frequent reason applicants are found ineligible is their income over a three-month period averages more than the federal poverty level (\$867 for an individual or \$1,467 for a household of three, for example).

OHP-Standard covers physician visits, prescription drugs, mental health and chemical dependency services, emergency medical treatment and limited dental, hospital and vision services. OHP-Standard clients pay monthly premiums ranging from nothing to \$20, depending on household income and size.

Meanwhile, the Oregon Health Plan's Plus benefit package is always open to low-income people who are 65 or older, blind, disabled, pregnant, younger than 19 or who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Applications for OHP-Plus are available by calling 1-800-359-9517 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Pacific time.

In all, the Oregon Health Plan covers approximately 430,000 Oregonians, 56 percent of whom are children and adolescents.

An estimated 576,000 of Oregon's 3.7 million residents have no health insurance, of whom the state estimates 140,000 adults would qualify for OHP-Standard if the program's budget did not limit enrollment.

###