

The Affordable Care Act allows youth who were in placement to have medical insurance coverage until they are 26 years old.

You may have heard of the new federal healthcare reform law, also known as the **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act**. People usually just call it the Affordable Care Act (ACA). What you may not know is that, if you are a youth who was in placement **and** you have received medical assistance benefits any time of or after your 18th birthday, the Affordable Care Act makes you eligible to receive medical assistance coverage until the age of 26, even if you are working.

You can apply for medical benefits so that you can continue medical, dental and behavioral health care services and obtain necessary prescriptions. If you are still in placement, you can talk with your caseworker on how you can continue your health insurance with no break in coverage. If you have already left foster care, you can apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us or call the PA Consumer Service center at 1-866-550-4355 to apply or ask questions. If you need help getting information to verify that you were in placement and receiving medical assistance on or after your 18th birthday, please contact the Agency at 724-228-6994 or toll-free at 1-888-619-9906 and ask to speak with your previous caseworker, their supervisor, an independent living caseworker or the Intake Department. They will help you gather the information you need.

Questions and Answers

How do I know if I'm eligible in the "former foster care" category?

Any youth who was in Pennsylvania's or another state's foster care system AND were enrolled in Medical Assistance at any time on or after their 18th birthday will be eligible until age 26. It does not matter what type of placement you were in to be eligible in the "former foster care" category. You are eligible if you were placed by the Agency in any type of placement setting (you may have been court-ordered to live with relatives, in a foster home, or in a group home or other facility).

What if I signed myself out of foster care when I was 18? Great question! You are still eligible!

What if I aged-out of foster care when I was 21? Another great question! You are still eligible!

What if I am 18 and still in foster care? The same health insurance you had when you were 17 is still in effect. You can speak with your caseworker for more information.

Who isn't eligible?

- Any person who was in foster care, but left before their 18th birthday.
- Any person who did not receive medical assistance while in foster care.

What if I was in placement in another state?

You are still eligible. You will need to apply and provide information to verify that you meet the eligibility requirements. Some ways to verify this are a prior court order and/or a letter from an official agency.

How can I apply?

Individuals may apply through COMPASS, Pennsylvania's online application for health and human service programs at www.compass.state.pa.us, or you can call the PA Consumer Service Center at 1-866-550-4355 to apply or ask questions.

What information do I need to apply?

You will need to complete a full health care application and provide all required documentation, including verification of income, in order to have eligibility determined for health care coverage. You must fully answer the questions on the application related to former foster status to ensure they are considered for eligibility under the former foster care category. If you need information about being in placement or receiving medical assistance, you can call the agency and talk to your former caseworker, their

supervisor, an independent living caseworker or the Intake Department. They will help you gather the information.

Always keep your address up to date! It is really important to remember that you will need to renew your coverage every year through the renewal process. Your local County Assistance Office (CAO) will contact you to renew your Medical Assistance (MA) health insurance coverage. Therefore, it is important that you provide the local CAO with any changes in address so they can send you a benefit renewal form and you can continue to receive health insurance coverage through MA. You can also create an online account on COMPASS, www.compass.state.pa.us, to monitor your benefits and receive notices online.

Where can I get more information?

Information is now available on the internet at www.healthcare.gov . Information about Pennsylvania's system is available at www.dpw.state.pa.us. The COMPASS homepage www.compass.state.pa.us will have a link you can click to "Learn More about the Health Insurance Marketplace". If you don't have internet access, you can call the federal hotline at 1-800-318-2596 or the PA Consumer Services Center at 1-866-550-4355 to apply or ask questions. The PA Youth Advisory Board Website www.independentlivingpa.org also has information.

You can also click **here** for a printable sheet of "Affordable Care Act and Former Foster Youth Questions and Answers" that has more questions and answers and all of the phone numbers and websites listed above.