



Department of Human Resources  
311 W. Saratoga St.  
Baltimore, MD. 21201-3521

## FIA INFORMATION MEMO

**Issuance Date:** January 22, 1997

**Effective Date:** February 1, 1997

**Control Number:** FIA/OPA # 97-10

**TO:** DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT  
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS  
*Charles E. Henry for*

**FROM:** KEVIN MAHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA

**RE:** NEW START-UP DATE FOR THE MARYLAND MEDICAID MANAGED  
CARE PROGRAM

**PROGRAM AFFECTED:** MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

**ORIGINATING OFFICE:** OPA/ DIVISION OF PROGRAM POLICY AND  
REGULATION

### BACKGROUND:

On Thursday, January 9, 1997, Martin Wasserman, M.D., J.D., Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), announced that the Maryland Medicaid Managed Care Program, HealthChoice, will be implemented on June 2, 1997, instead of February 1, 1997, as originally planned. At that time, the Department will begin phased-in implementation for 300,000 members. Beginning in June 1997, one fifth of the waiver-eligible recipients will be selected on a random basis and enrolled each month. All 300,000 members should be enrolled by November 1997.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was concerned that without more time, there would not be a sufficient number of approved Managed Care Organizations to offer recipients real choice in selecting their provider. The next four months will afford the managed care organizations time to build their provider networks and insure continuity of care.

The regulations allowing local health departments to complete the eligibility processing of Pregnant Women and Children (PWC) and Maryland Kids Count (MKC) applications are proposed to coincide with the waiver process. Therefore, the LDSS's will continue to be responsible for the PWC and MKC eligibility determination process until June 2, 1997. Please disregard Action Transmittal 97-68 faxed to local departments December 23, 1996.

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During the months leading up to June 2, 1997, Local Health Departments (LHDs) and other presumptive eligibility sites will continue to use the presumptive eligibility process for pregnant women. In addition, DHMH will encourage all LHD's to perform initial processing for the PWC and MKC cases. This means that they will take applications, complete the interview process, collect verifications, and forward the completed application to the LDSS for a final determination. This is already being done in some counties. A further expansion of this throughout the State will ensure that LHD staff have a firm grounding in PWC/MKC eligibility policy before June 2, 1997. Additional training on CARES for LHD staff will also be conducted during this time period.

DHMH is moving forward with setting up computers in each LHD, which will be connected to MMIS II, CARES, and AMF. In the next few weeks, DHMH will issue security log-ons to LHD staff so that they can inquire into MMIS II before taking PWC/MKC eligibility applications. DHR and DHMH will also finish security processing for CARES log-ons in the next few months so LHD's can begin working with the system and be more proficient with CARES before June 2, 1997.

DHMH staff asked me to thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the Pregnant Women and Children's and Maryland Kids Count programs. They look forward to working with you in the upcoming months to ensure that there will be a smooth transition in June 1997. If you have questions concerning this memorandum, please call Susan Tucker or Mary King at DHMH on (410)767-6538 or Patricia Jeffers at FIA on (410) 767-7143.