FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Current MO HealthNet and Child Care Subsidy recipients get benefits extended

JEFFERSON CITY, MO -- For the past several weeks the Department of Social Services (DSS) has been in close contact with the Governor's Office, and the Departments of Health and Senior Services and Mental Health to determine how best to respond to the constantly evolving COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Social Services takes very seriously its responsibility to serve Missouri's most vulnerable citizens during this time. Today, the department announces the following temporary policy changes:

Missouri Medicaid-MO HealthNet

- Consistent with the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, effective immediately, the Department of Social Services will not terminate eligibility for any Medicaid participant unless the individual requests a voluntary termination of eligibility or the individual ceases to be a resident of the state through the end the federal emergency COVID-19 declaration.
- The Department of Social Services is extending 90 days of MO HealthNet coverage to Missourians ages 19-64 who test positive for COVID-19 and meet the income and resource eligibility guidelines.
- MO HealthNet is relaxing requirements related to prescription refills and prior authorizations to ensure participants have access to essential medications.
- The Medicaid Audit and Compliance Unit is expediting new provider enrollment applications and waiving certain enrollment requirements such as application fees and on-site visits to enable providers to serve Medicaid participants.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, MO HealthNet providers can use telehealth services or other alternative methods, such as Skype or Face-Time, to provide services to a MHD participant at home.
- MO HealthNet is waiving the requirement that physicians must have an established relationship with the patient before providing services via telehealth, and waiving the co-payment for any services provided by means of telehealth, during this event.

Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- The Family Support Division is waiving all work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents for 90 days

Child Care Subsidy Program

- Child Care Subsidy benefits are extended for 90 days
- The Child Care Subsidy program will work on a case-by-case basis to approve additional hours of care for families affected by COVID-19.
- Child Care Subsidy provider application renewals are extended for 90 days.

Currently, the Department of Social Services, Family Support Division has requested waivers from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service to

- Waive all Food Stamp adverse action notices for 90 days
- Waive initial in-person Food Stamp interviews for 90 days
  Extend Food Stamp certification periods by 12 months

"Now more than ever, we need to assure Missouri's most vulnerable citizens that their essential needs will be met," **Governor Mike Parson** said. "The bottom line is that any Missourian currently receiving Medicaid or Child Care benefits does not need to do anything at this time for those benefits to continue. Anyone now in need of those benefits as a result of COVID-19 should contact the Family Support Division."

"When a Missourian is in need of medical services or medications during the COVID-19 pandemic, we want the health care provider's primary focus to be on delivering what a MO HealthNet participant needs to remain healthy, not on the participant's coverage," said **Todd Richardson, Director, MO HealthNet Division, Department of Social Services.**

"Family Support Division staff is focused on keeping benefits going for current Medicaid and Child Care recipients and getting low-income Missourians in need of benefits enrolled as quickly as possible," said **Jennifer Tidball, Acting Director, Department of Social Services**. "If you received a letter informing you that your Medicaid or Child Care Subsidy benefits are ending, you do not need to take any action, those benefits will continue. If the USDA approves our Food Stamp program waivers, the department will immediately share that information."

If you or someone you know are low-income and are now in need of these benefits, please reach out to the Family Support Division for help. Child Care Subsidy benefit recipients who need additional child care hours should also contact the Family Support Division for assistance. To keep Missourians safe, they can to do business with the Family Support Division without leaving home. They can apply for services online by visiting **MyDSS.mo.gov (https://mydss.mo.gov/)**, over the phone by calling 1-855-FSD-INFO, or in-person at their nearest **Family Support Division Resource Center (https://dss.mo.gov/offices.htm)**.

This situation continues to evolve and the department will continue to evaluate ways to streamline access to essential services. For updated information on program accommodations and policy guidance visit **https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19 (https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19)**. MO HealthNet providers can find additional information online **https://dss.mo.gov/mhd/providers/pages/provtips.htm. (https://dss.mo.gov/mhd/providers/pages/provtips.htm)**

The mission of the Department of Social Services is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives. Visit **dss.mo.gov (https://dss.mo.gov/)** to learn more about the Department of Social Services and follow us on **Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/MOSocialServices/)** and **Twitter (https://twitter.com/DSS_Missouri)**.

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