

Online Renewal Tool makes it Easier for New Yorkers to Renew Medicaid and Family Health Plus

On Monday, October 18, Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs and Commissioner Robert Doar unveiled a new tool that allows Medicaid and Family Health Plus customers to renew their health insurance online. Families and individuals with public health insurance can recertify their coverage conveniently through ACCESS NYC, an online resource that links all of the City's health and human services programs. This represents an important part of Mayor Bloomberg's commitment to using advanced technology to make the City's services easier for all New Yorkers to access. Online renewal will also improve outcomes for Medicaid and Family Health Plus customers, since continuous coverage means health insurance will be there when customers need it.

"Using technology to make it easier for New Yorkers to keep their health coverage helps everyone," said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs. "It will help prevent unnecessary interruptions in coverage, provide convenience for busy New Yorkers, and bring even greater efficiencies to our operations."

"New York City continues its excellent record of providing public health insurance coverage to individuals and families," said HRA Commissioner Robert Doar. "The launch of our new online renewal tool is one more example of the Bloomberg Administration's commitment to using cutting edge technology that will save taxpayer money while making it easier for individuals to renew."

Each month, HRA mails out close to 100,000 renewal packets to Medicaid and Family Health Plus customers who need to renew their coverage. Though response rates to the mailing are high, a failure to respond means that customers lose their coverage until they re-apply. The added convenience of renewing online through ACCESS NYC means that fewer customers will experience these gaps in coverage, and HRA will be spared the extra expense of re-enrolling customers in the appropriate program.

New York City is at the forefront not only of online renewal of Medicaid and other City services, but of health insurance coverage in general. Since January, 2002, the number of people covered by public health insurance has increased by 47 percent. Over 3 million New Yorkers now have Medicaid, Family Health Plus, or Child Health Plus coverage. New York City has the best insurance rates for children of the eight largest cities in the US, insuring 95 percent of children. Online renewal for Medicaid and other public health insurance will also provide a potential model for online applications for coverage and renewal through insurance exchanges as part of the federal health care reform law.

Online renewal will be available in seven languages: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Russian, Chinese, Korean and Arabic. Customers who don't have internet access at home, or who are unfamiliar with the web can get help from hundreds of community organizations and health providers conveniently located throughout the city who can help Medicaid customers through the online renewal process.

For more information, please call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov. More information on Medicaid is available at http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/directory/medicaid_offices.shtml.