

**NUMBER**

#20-21-06

**DATE**

June 5, 2020

**OF INTEREST TO**

County Directors

Social Services Supervisors and  
Staff

Financial Assistance Supervisors  
and Workers

Mille Lacs Tribal TANF

Tribal Chairpersons and Tribal  
Health Directors

Health Care Eligibility  
Operations (HCEO) Managers,  
Supervisors, and Staff

**ACTION/DUE DATE**

Implement effective March 13,  
2020

**EXPIRATION DATE**

June 5, 2022

## DHS Explains Treatment of State, Local and Tribal COVID-19 Relief Payments for Minnesota Health Care Programs

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### TOPIC

How to treat payments made to individuals to relieve the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic from state, local and tribal governments for purposes of determining eligibility for Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency.

### PURPOSE

This bulletin provides information about the treatment of payments made to MHCP applicants and enrollees by state, local and tribal governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for purposes of determining eligibility for MHCP during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency.

### CONTACT

Counties, tribal agencies, and HCEO should submit policy questions via HealthQuest.

All others should direct questions to the following:

Health Care Eligibility and Access (HCEA) Division  
PO Box 64989  
540 Cedar Street St. Paul, MN 55164-0989

### SIGNED

MATT ANDERSON

Assistant Commissioner/State Medicaid Director  
Health Care Administration

### TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

## I. Background

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On April 24, 2020, Governor Walz issued Emergency Executive Order 20-42 which states that payments received by Minnesotans from state, local and tribal governments to relieve the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic must not be counted as income and assets when determining eligibility for Department of Human Services (DHS) programs during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency, subject to any necessary federal approval. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) provided federal approval on May 22, 2020, to exclude these payments for the following Medical Assistance (MA) populations and programs who are not subject to the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) methodology:

- Medical Assistance for People Age 65 and Older, Blind or Disabled (MA-ABD)
- Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD)
- Medical Assistance under the TEFRA Option
- Medical Assistance for Families with Children and Adults (MA-FCA) subject to a medical spenddown
- Medicare Savings Programs (MSP): Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMB), Service Limited Medicare Beneficiaries (SLMB), Qualified Individuals (QI) and Qualified Working Disabled (QWD)
- Emergency Medical Assistance (for people age 65 and older, blind or disabled and FCA populations subject to a medical spenddown)

Direct payments made by state, local and tribal governments that relieve the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that are not subject to federal income tax, do not count as income for MA applicants and enrollees subject to the MAGI methodology or in the projected annual income (PAI) for MinnesotaCare applicants and enrollees. Because non-taxable income payments are not counted for these programs under current policy, federal approval was not needed.

These payments are separate from other forms of COVID-related payments, such as the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) and federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act payments (also known as economic impact payments and recovery rebates). Bulletins [#20-21-04](#) and [#20-21-05](#) have information about how to treat these payments.

The policies in this bulletin apply to all MA and MinnesotaCare applicants and enrollees, including applicants and enrollees from or receiving services from a Tribal Nation.

## II. Treatment of COVID-19 Relief Payments

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These policies are effective March 13, 2020.

### **MA applicants and enrollees not subject to the MAGI methodology:**

- Payments made by state, local and tribal governments to relieve the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic do not count as income.

- Payments retained after the month of receipt do not count as an asset. Payments do not have to be held in a separate account to be excluded.
- Verification is required that shows the payment was made by a state, local or tribal government to provide direct relief during the COVID-19 emergency. Workers must enter a case note to document the date, amount and source of the COVID-19 relief payment(s) that are excluded as income or assets.

**MA and MinnesotaCare applicants and enrollees subject to the MAGI methodology:**

- Payments made by state, local and tribal governments to relieve the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that are not taxable, do not count as income for MA and do not count in a person's projected annual income (PAI) for MinnesotaCare.

### **III. Action Required**

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County, tribal and DHS workers must follow the policies outlined in this bulletin.

#### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory**

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-297-3862 or toll free at 800-657-3672 or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.