



# **Minnesota Health Care Programs**

## **Eligibility Policy Manual**

**This document provides information about additions and revisions to the Minnesota Department of Human Service's Minnesota Health Care Programs Eligibility Policy Manual.**

**Manual Letter #19.5**

**September 1, 2019**

# Manual Letter #19.5

This manual letter lists new and revised policy for the Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) Eligibility Policy Manual (EPM) as of September 1, 2019. The effective date of new or revised policy may not be the same date the information is added to the EPM. Refer to the Summary of Changes to identify when the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) implemented the policy.

## I. Summary of Changes

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This section of the manual letter provides a summary of newly added sections and changes made to existing sections.

### A. [EPM Home Page](#)

We add a hyperlink to DHS bulletin #19-21-04, DHS Announces Changes to the MAGI Methodology for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare. This bulletin was published on August 27, 2019, and provides information about changes in federal law to how certain income are evaluated for the purpose of determining eligibility for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare. These changes will be incorporated into the EPM in a future manual letter. Continue to refer to the bulletin for current policy until the changes are incorporated into the manual.

We did not add a hyperlink to DHS bulletin #19-21-03, Payment Requirements that Apply to County Subcontracts with MA-funded Targeted Case Management Providers, because the bulletin does not include information relevant to MHCP eligibility.

A link to this manual letter is also added to the EPM home page.

### B. [Appendix F Standards and Guidelines](#)

We update the amounts for the following allowances:

- Utility allowance
- Electricity allowance
- Telephone allowance

The updated amounts become effective October 1, 2019.

## II. Documentation of Changes

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This section of the manual letter documents all changes made to an existing section. Deleted text is displayed with strikethrough formatting and newly added text is displayed with underline formatting. Links to the revised and archived versions of the section are also provided.

A. [EPM Home Page](#)

B. [Appendix F Standards and Guidelines](#)

## A. EPM Home Page

Minnesota Health Care Programs

# Eligibility Policy Manual

Welcome to the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Minnesota Health Care Programs Eligibility Policy Manual (EPM). This manual contains the official DHS eligibility policies for the Minnesota Health Care Programs including Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare. Minnesota Health Care Programs policies are based on the state and federal laws and regulations that govern the programs. See Legal Authority section for more information.

The EPM is for use by applicants, enrollees, health care eligibility workers and other interested parties. It provides accurate and timely information about policy only. The EPM does not provide procedural instructions or systems information that health care eligibility workers need to use.

## Manual Letters

DHS issues periodic manual letters to announce changes in the EPM. These letters document updated sections and describe any policy changes.

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #19.1, January 1, 2019

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #19.2, April 1, 2019

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #19.3 June 1, 2019

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #19.4, August 7, 2019

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #19.5, September 1, 2019

### 2018 Manual Letters

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #18.1, January 1, 2018

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #18.2, April 1, 2018

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #18.3, June 1, 2018

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #18.4, September 1, 2018

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #18.5, December 1, 2018

### 2017 Manual Letters

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #17.1, April 1, 2017

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #17.2, June 1, 2017

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #17.3, August 1, 2017

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #17.4, September 1, 2017

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #17.5, December 1, 2017

2016 Manual Letters

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #16.1, June 1, 2016

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #16.2, August 1, 2016

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #16.3, September 1, 2016

MHCP EPM Manual Letter #16.4, December 1, 2016

## **Bulletins**

DHS bulletins provide information and direction to county and tribal health and human services agencies and other DHS business partners. According to DHS policy, bulletins more than two years old are obsolete. Anyone can subscribe to the Bulletins mailing list.

A DHS Bulletin supersedes information in this manual until incorporated into this manual. The following bulletins have not yet been incorporated into the EPM:

- Bulletin #17-21-05, DHS Explains How Unified Cash Asset Policy Affects Medical Assistance (MA) Eligibility
- Bulletin #17-21-08, DHS Explains Changes to the Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) Application for Medical Assistance for Long-Term Care Services (MA-LTC)
- Bulletin #18-21-03, Periodic Data Matching for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare
- Bulletin #19-21-01, Pre-eligibility Verification for Medical Assistance for Families with Children and Adults
- Bulletin #19-21-02, DHS Announces Implementation of the Account Validation Service (AVS) for Medical Assistance (MA)
- Bulletin #19-21-04, DHS Announces Changes to the MAGI Methodology for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare

This manual consolidates and updates eligibility policy previously found in the Health Care Programs Manual (HCPM) and Insurance Affordability Programs Manual (IAPM). Prior versions of policy from the HCPM and IAPM are available upon request.

Refer to the EPM Archive for archived sections of the EPM.

## **Contact Us**

Direct questions about the Minnesota Health Care Programs Eligibility Policy Manual to the DHS Health Care Eligibility and Access (HCEA) Division, P.O. Box 64989, 540 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55164-0989, call (888) 938-3224 or fax (651) 431-7423.

Health care eligibility workers must follow agency procedures to submit policy-related questions to HealthQuest.

## Legal Authority

Many legal authorities govern Minnesota Health Care Programs, including but not limited to: Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Titles 26, 42 and 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations; and Minnesota Statutes chapters 256B and 256L. In addition, DHS has obtained waivers of certain federal regulations from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Each topic in the EPM includes applicable legal citations at the bottom of the page.

DHS has made every effort to include all applicable statutes, laws, regulations and other presiding authorities; however, erroneous citations or omissions do not imply that there are no applicable legal citations or other presiding authorities. The EPM provides program eligibility policy and should not be construed as legal advice.

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Previous Versions  
Manual Letter #19.4, August 7, 2019  
Manual Letter #19.3, June 1, 2019  
Manual Letter # 19.2, April 1, 2019  
Manual Letter #19.1, January 1, 2019  
Manual Letter #18.5, December 1, 2018  
Manual Letter #18.4, September 1, 2018  
Manual Letter #18.3, June 1, 2018  
Manual Letter #18.2, April 1, 2018  
Manual Letter #18.1, January 1, 2018  
Manual Letter #17.5, December 1, 2017  
Manual Letter #17.4, September 1, 2017  
Manual Letter #17.3, August 1, 2017  
Manual Letter #17.2, June 1, 2017  
Manual Letter #17.1, April 1, 2017  
Manual Letter #16.4, December 22, 2016  
Manual Letter #16.3, September 1, 2016  
Manual Letter #16.1, June 1, 2016 (Original Version)

## Archive Information

- Publication date: August 7, 2019
- Archived date: September 1, 2019
- Links:
  - [Archived page](#)
  - [Revised page](#)

## B. Appendix F Standards and Guidelines

Appendix F

# Standards and Guidelines

This appendix provides figures used to determine eligibility for a person, or in a specific calculation completed to determine eligibility.

## Community Spouse Allowances

The Community Spouse Allowances are used when determining the long-term care (LTC) income calculation's community spouse allocation.

### Basic Shelter Allowance

The Basic Shelter Allowance is used to determine if the community spouse has any excess shelter expenses.

Effective Dates	Basic Shelter Allowance
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020	\$635
July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019	\$617

### Maximum Monthly Income Allowance

The Maximum Monthly Income Allowance, along with the Minimum Monthly Income Allowance, is used to determine the community spouse's monthly maintenance needs amount.

Effective Dates	Maximum Monthly Income Allowance
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	\$3,160.50
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	\$3,090

### Minimum Monthly Income Allowance

The Minimum Monthly Income Allowance, along with the Maximum Monthly Income Allowance, is used to determine the community spouse's monthly maintenance needs amount.

Effective Dates	Minimum Monthly Income Allowance
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020	\$ 2,115
July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019	\$2,058

### Utility Allowance



The Utility Allowance is allowed as a shelter expense if the community spouse is responsible for heating or cooling costs.

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Utility Allowance</b>
<u>October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020</u>	<u>\$490</u>
October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019	\$493
<del>October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018</del>	<del>\$556</del>

The Electricity and Telephone Allowances are allowed as shelter expenses if the community spouse is not responsible for heating or cooling expenses, but is responsible for electricity or telephone expenses.

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Electricity Allowance</b>
<u>October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020</u>	<u>\$143</u>
October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019	\$126
<del>October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018</del>	<del>\$172</del>

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Telephone Allowance</b>
<u>October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020</u>	<u>\$49</u>
October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019	\$47
<del>October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018</del>	<del>\$41</del>

## **Federal Poverty Guidelines**

The federal poverty guidelines (FPG) are used to determine income eligibility for the Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP).

Refer to Insurance and Affordability Programs (IAPs) Income and Asset Guidelines (DHS-3461A) for the current FPG.

## **Home Equity Limit**

The Home Equity Limit is applied only in specific situations and at certain times.

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Home Equity Limit</b>
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	\$585,000
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	\$572,000

## IRS Mileage Rate

The IRS mileage rate is used in many calculations to determine eligibility or reimbursement costs.

Effective Dates	IRS Mileage Rate
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	58 cents
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	54.5 cents

## Long-Term Needs Allowances

The LTC needs allowances provide figures for needs allowances used in the LTC income calculation and for determining the community spouse or family allocation amounts.

### Clothing and Personal Needs Allowance

The Clothing and Personal Needs Allowance is used when the enrollee is not eligible for any of the other LTC needs allowances.

Effective Dates	Clothing and Personal Needs Allowance
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	\$102
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	\$99

### Home Maintenance Allowance

The Home Maintenance Allowance can be deducted from a person's LTC income calculation if certain conditions are met.

Effective Dates	Home Maintenance Allowance
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020	\$1,041
July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019	\$1,012

### Special Income Standard for Elderly Waiver Maintenance Needs Allowance

The Special Income Standard for Elderly Waiver (SIS-EW) maintenance needs allowance is used in the LTC income calculation for persons who have income at or below the Special Income Standard (SIS).

Effective Dates	Maintenance Needs Allowance
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020	\$1,024
July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019	\$1,003

## Maximum Asset Allowance

The Maximum Asset Allowance is used for the community spouse asset allowance for an asset assessment.

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	No minimum	\$126,420
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	No minimum	\$123,600

## **MinnesotaCare Premium Amounts**

MinnesotaCare premiums are calculated using a sliding fee scale based on household size and annual income.

Refer to MinnesotaCare Premium Estimator Table (DHS-4139) for information about MinnesotaCare premiums. The table provides an estimate of the premium before receiving the actual bill. The premium calculated by the system and listed on the bill is the official calculation and the amount to be paid.

## **Pickle Disregard**

The Pickle Disregard is a disregard of the Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) cost of living adjustment (COLA) amounts for Medical Assistance (MA) Method B and the Medicare Savings Programs (MSP).

<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Pickle Disregard</b>
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	1.028
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	1.02

## **Remedial Care Expense**

The Remedial Care Expense deduction amount can be used as a health care expense when meeting a spenddown or as an income deduction in an LTC income calculation.

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Remedial Care Expense</b>
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020	\$180
January 1, 2019 to June 30, 2019	\$196

## **Roomer and Boarder Standard Amount**

The Roomer and Boarder Standard income is used in calculating the amount of self-employment income a person who rents or boards another person has to add to the MA Method A income calculation.

<b>Roomer and Boarder Standard</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Roomer Amount	\$71
Boarder Amount	\$155
Roomer plus Boarder Amount	\$226

### **Special Income Standard**

The Special Income Standard (SIS) is used to determine certain criteria for the Elderly Waiver (EW) Program.

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>SIS</b>
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	\$2,313
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	\$2,250

### **Statewide Average Payment for Skilled Nursing Facility Care**

The statewide average payment for skilled nursing facility (SAPSNF) care amount is used to determine a transfer penalty for MA. The SAPSNF is updated annually in July.

<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>SAPSNF</b>
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020	\$7,960
July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019	\$7,288

### **Student Earned Income Exclusion**

The Student Earned Income Exclusion is a disregard of earned income for people who are under age 22 and regularly attending school. It is only available for MA Method B and MSP.

<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Annual</b>
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	\$1,870	\$7,550
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	\$1,820	\$7,350

### **Supplemental Security Income Maximum Payment Amount**

These figures are the maximum benefit amounts for people eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). A person's SSI benefit amount is based on the income of the person and certain responsible household members.

SSI benefit payments may be deducted from the LTC income calculation if the person qualifies for the Special SSI Deduction.

Effective Date	Individual
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	\$771
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	\$750

Effective Date	Couple
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019	\$1,157
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	\$1,125

### Tax Filing Income Threshold For Children and Tax Dependents

The tax filing income threshold refers to the income level at which a person must file a federal income tax return. The thresholds for tax dependents determines whether a child's or tax dependents income is counted or excluded when calculating household income for MA-FCA and MinnesotaCare eligibility.

The income threshold for tax filing varies based on the tax dependents age and marital status and whether the person is blind. If a child or tax dependent has income at or below these thresholds, his or her income will not count toward the household income for MA-FCA and MinnesotaCare eligibility.

The income threshold applies to the taxable income that a child or tax dependent is expected to receive in the tax year. Nontaxable income, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and veteran's benefits, is not included in determining whether a child's or tax dependent's income is at or below the income threshold. Any nontaxable portion of a child's Social Security dependent or survivor benefits is not included.

The income thresholds for children and tax dependents are:

#### Tax Filing Income Thresholds for Tax Dependents

Marital Status	Age over 65?	Blind?	Income Type	2018 Tax Year Threshold Amount	2019 Tax Year Threshold Amount
Single	No	No	Earned Income	\$6,350	\$12,000
Single	No	No	Unearned Income	\$1,050	\$1,050
Single	No	No	Gross Income	Larger of \$1,050 or Earned Income	Larger of \$1,050 or Earned Income

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Age over 65?</b>	<b>Blind?</b>	<b>Income Type</b>	<b>2018 Tax Year Threshold Amount</b>	<b>2019 Tax Year Threshold Amount</b>
				Reported up to \$6,000 + \$350	Reported up to \$11,650 + \$350
Single	Yes	No	Earned Income	\$7,900	\$13,600
Single	Yes	No	Unearned Income	\$2,600	\$2,650
Single	Yes	No	Gross Income	Larger of \$2,600 or Earned Income Reported up to \$6,000 + \$1,900	Larger of \$2,650 or Earned Income Reported up to \$11,650 + \$1,950
Single	No	Yes	Earned Income	\$7,900	\$13,600
Single	No	Yes	Unearned Income	\$2,600	\$2,650
Single	No	Yes	Gross Income	Larger of \$2,600 or Earned Income Reported up to \$6,000 + \$1,900	Larger of \$2,650 or Earned Income Reported up to \$11,650 + \$1,950
Single	Yes	Yes	Earned Income	\$9,450	\$15,200
Single	Yes	Yes	Unearned Income	\$4,150	\$4,250
Single	Yes	Yes	Gross Income	Larger of \$4,150 or Earned Income Reported up to \$6,000 + \$3,450	Larger of \$4,250 or Earned Income Reported up to \$11,650 + \$3,550
Married	No	No	Earned Income	\$6,350	\$12,000
Married	No	No	Unearned Income	\$1,050	\$1,050
Married	No	No	Gross Income	Larger of \$1,050 or Earned Income Reported up to \$6,000 + \$350	Larger of \$1,050 or Earned Income Reported up to \$11,650 + \$350
Married	Yes	No	Earned Income	\$7,600	\$13,300

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Age over 65?</b>	<b>Blind?</b>	<b>Income Type</b>	<b>2018 Tax Year Threshold Amount</b>	<b>2019 Tax Year Threshold Amount</b>
Married	Yes	No	Unearned Income	\$2,300	\$2,350
Married	Yes	No	Gross Income	Larger of \$2,300 or Earned Income Reported up to \$6,000 + \$1,600	Larger of \$2,350 or Earned Income Reported up to \$11,650 + \$1,650
Married	No	Yes	Earned Income	\$7,600	\$13,300
Married	No	Yes	Unearned Income	\$2,300	\$2,350
Married	No	Yes	Gross Income	Larger of \$2,300 or Earned Income Reported up to \$6,000 + \$1,600	Larger of \$2,350 or Earned Income Reported up to \$11,650 + \$1,650
Married	Yes	Yes	Earned Income	\$8,850	\$14,600
Married	Yes	Yes	Unearned Income	\$3,550	\$3,650
Married	Yes	Yes	Gross Income	Larger of \$3,550 or Earned Income Reported up to \$6,000 + \$2,850	Larger of \$3,650 or Earned Income Reported up to \$11,650 + \$2,950

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