

Feds urge states to slow down on dropping folks from Medicaid as pandemic relief ends

June 13 2023, by Cara Murez



Large numbers of people are losing their Medicaid health coverage as

pandemic relief measures end, and the federal government is asking states to slow down the purging of rolls.

Some people losing coverage could still be eligible and are being cut only for administrative reasons, such as not responding in time with their forms or not understanding the renewal process, the Biden Administration contended.

"I am deeply concerned with the number of people unnecessarily losing coverage, especially those who appear to have lost coverage for avoidable reasons that state Medicaid offices have the power to prevent or mitigate," Health and [Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra](#) wrote in a [letter](#) Monday to governors.

Nobody "should lose coverage simply because they changed addresses, didn't receive a form or didn't have enough information about the renewal process," Becerra stressed.

States are now re-evaluating Medicaid eligibility after having been prohibited from dropping people during the early years of the pandemic, the *Associated Press* reported.

While some states have not removed anyone yet, others are moving more swiftly, cutting tens of thousands of people.

Arkansas was among those that had [officials](#) particularly concerned, according to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). More than 100,000 people in that state lost their Medicaid coverage, mostly for procedural reasons, the *AP* reported.

Officials in Arkansas countered that they were following the timeline dictated for states and noted numerous attempts to contact recipients, with [Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders](#) saying the program was returning to

what had been intended.

Half or more of those whose cases were reviewed in April or May in Florida, Idaho, New Hampshire and Oklahoma also lost coverage, according to the *AP*.

A total of 18 [states](#) sent preliminary data to CMS revealing that, among those whose renewals were due in April, about 45% retained coverage.

Another 31% lost coverage, with about 80% of those losing their healthcare because of procedural reasons, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the *AP* said.

About 24% of forms were still being processed, so final outcomes weren't yet known, the *AP* reported.

Healthcare advocates expressed concerns about purging the rolls of those who didn't respond to notices.

"People who are procedurally dis-enrolled often are not going to realize they've lost coverage until they show up for a medical appointment or they go to fill their prescription and are told you no longer have [insurance coverage](#)," said [Allie Gardner](#), a senior research associate at the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families.

More information: The nonprofit KFF has facts about being [uninsured](#).

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