

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2017

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma,

We write to respectfully ask the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to swiftly prepare and publish a fact sheet that clearly explains how American citizens from Puerto Rico who were enrolled in Medicaid or Medicare while residing in the U.S. territory can continue their coverage when they relocate to Florida or another state in the wake of Hurricane Maria. Multiple press reports and constituent inquiries have shown there is a considerable amount of confusion on this subject.¹ A fact sheet would help displaced individuals and their families, health care providers, insurers, and government officials at the federal, state and local level better understand the relevant rules governing this process.

According to the State of Florida, between October 3, 2017 and November 9, 2017, over 143,000 individuals from Puerto Rico arrived in Florida through Miami International Airport, Orlando International Airport, and Port Everglades—and this number is expected to continue to rise in the coming months. Displaced residents from Puerto Rico have endured tremendous hardship, and it is critical that we help them maintain access to essential health care services when they relocate to Florida, whether on a temporary or permanent basis.

For these reasons, we urge CMS to publish a fact sheet that answers the following questions regarding health coverage through Medicaid and Medicare:

- Puerto Rico’s Medicaid managed care program, known as *Mi Salud*, has about 1.4 million enrollees, which is over 40 percent of the island’s population.
 - If a resident of Puerto Rico who is enrolled in *Mi Salud* relocates to Florida or another state, can he or she immediately receive care from a stateside physician, hospital, or other provider, using the card issued by the Puerto Rico-based managed care organization?

¹ See, e.g., Bianca Padró Ocasio, “Displaced Puerto Ricans face medical insurance confusion in Central Florida,” *Orlando Sentinel* (November 10, 2017), available at <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/breaking-news/os-puerto-rico-health-insurance-issues-20171108-story.html>.

- If not, what specific steps must the displaced individual take to enroll in the state's Medicaid program? Has CMS authorized states to utilize an expedited Medicaid enrollment process for hurricane-displaced individuals?
- According to CMS, in September 2017, there were over 773,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Puerto Rico. About 583,000 of those individuals (75 percent) are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, while 190,000 are enrolled in traditional Medicare.
 - If a resident of Puerto Rico who is enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan relocates to Florida or another state, can he or she immediately receive care from a stateside physician, hospital, or other provider? Does the answer to this question vary based on the identity of the company and plan in question?
 - What additional out-of-pocket costs, if any, should hurricane-displaced individuals enrolled in Medicare Advantage anticipate, now that their providers fall outside of their plan's network?
 - Will hurricane-displaced individuals enrolled in Medicare Advantage qualify for a special enrollment period so they may switch to a new Medicare Advantage plan?
 - If a resident of Puerto Rico who is enrolled in traditional Medicare relocates to Florida or another state, can he or she immediately receive care from a stateside provider?
 - What steps is CMS taking to inform and educate displaced individuals enrolled in Medicare Advantage or traditional Medicare about their coverage options once they have arrived in the mainland?
 - What steps is CMS taking to ensure that stateside providers have the necessary information to properly process and care for displaced individuals from Puerto Rico? Has CMS developed a system to quickly respond to providers' questions as they deal with the unique challenges that have arisen and will continue to arise?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. It is our hope that this fact sheet can be prepared and made publicly available by CMS without undue delay. It would provide much-needed clarity and alleviate confusion.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress