



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND HEALTH SERVICES

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**MEDICAID COMMUNICATION NO. 12-15**

**DATE: October 29, 2012**

**TO:** County Welfare Agency (CWA) Directors  
Statewide Eligibility Agency

**SUBJECT:** School Lunch Program – Express Lane Eligibility for Children

### **Background**

Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009 allows States the option for Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) for uninsured children/students determined to be eligible for Free and Reduced price lunch using specified application methods. New Jersey uses the "**Temporary Enrollment Pending Screen and Enroll**" eligibility process option for initial eligibility determinations. ELE processing is for uninsured school children up to age 21 (age 19 for CHIP) who are participating in the free or reduced school lunch program and their siblings within that same household.

The Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) launched an express lane project statewide using NJ FamilyCare School Express Lane applications. All Express Lane school applications will be sent to the state vendor for processing; however, the state anticipates the involvement of all CWAs which could receive Express Lane School applications that would need to be transferred for ELE processing by the applicable CWA.

All school districts in New Jersey are directed to ask the health insurance status of each student in their district and send an electronic mail file of all those students identified as uninsured annually in October, to DMAHS. All districts are also asked to provide a Free or Reduced Price Lunch eligibility indicator on their file of uninsured students submitted. DMAHS will send the appropriate application to the household based on the School Districts credentialed file indicating the uninsured students' participation status in the School Lunch Program (SLP). Those on free lunch status receive an application with a large "**A**" on the top. Those on reduced lunch status receive an application with a large "**B**" on the top. These special Express lane applications are not otherwise accessible to the general public. Those listed as uninsured full lunch payment students (not on the free or reduced price lunch

program) will be mailed a regular application which will have standard full eligibility determination processing.

### **General School Lunch Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) Overview**

- Each school is required to capture information as to the insurance status of each child at the beginning of the school year per the State Department of Education. Each parent must give permission in order to share the child's health insurance status.
- School District families complete Free and Reduced Price Lunch applications annually. Parents will be given an opportunity to opt out from having their child's lunch status information shared also. School staff from each district reviews each Free and Reduced Price Lunch application and determines eligibility for either Free Lunch or Reduced price lunch, otherwise the students are determined or take the option of full lunch payment status. They submit their certified list of uninsured students with their SLP participation status to DMAHS.
- The School Districts through the Department of Education and with parental authorizations will submit to DMAHS an electronic mail file for the students who are uninsured and the status of their participation in the SLP (Free, Reduced or Full Payment).
- Specially coded and shorter (School Express Lane) applications (English/Spanish with a cover letter translated into five languages will be mailed to all SLP households identified. All completed Express Applications are returned to the state vendor for processing.
- Applications with a child requesting coverage which is found to also have an open family case at the county will be transferred to the respective CWA so the child can be expressly enrolled with their family.
- Any 19-21 year old applying on an Express Application for Free SLP participation will be sent to the CWA for them to be expressly enrolled into the Medicaid Special program. This means eligibility is based on their free or reduced price lunch status with income confirmation as a gross income test. The state vendor cannot process expressly into the Medicaid Special program.
- Express applicant children are temporarily added to the applicable eligibility file and then the "screen and enroll" process for a full eligibility determination begins with system verification of the families' household income, citizenship and identity when appropriate social security numbers (SSNs) are provided (or the self-declared **income** information when SSNs are not provided). The temporary enrollment status requires the "screen and enroll" process including systemic verification procedures to be processed timely within the 10 days case processing provisions.
- ELE is approved for utilization with "initial eligibility determinations" and those determined fully eligible through ELE processing are required to complete the regular Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare upon renewal.

## Express Lane Free and Reduced Price Lunch Process

### Free Lunch "A" Beneficiaries Process

- Uninsured students receiving Free lunch are mailed a **School Express Lane Application A**-coded to indicate **Free lunch uninsured beneficiary**. For purposes of this ELE processing and their school lunch status, their income is accepted as being less than or equal to 133% FPL.
- Only if all of the questions are answered will the application be automatically eligible for NJ FamilyCare Plan A enrollment. The information on the application is self-declared with the exception of citizenship; by signing the application, the applicant attests that all information is true and certifies identity. The child is added to the eligibility file by the state vendor or added to an open case at the county and given four months reasonable opportunity to prove citizenship/qualified immigrant status (U.S. citizenship status can be verified utilizing the SVES system).
- All those "temporarily" determined to be initially eligible must have income verifications using electronic databases such as LOOPS, DABS and Wages. **If the parent, guardian, or custodial relative does not provide the optional SSN, which would be used to verify their income, then the income information is accepted as self-declared (based on their SLP status). A sampling of those self-declared families who had eligibility determined using SLP Express lane eligibility processing will be reviewed by the State's Quality Control Unit.**
- Any incomplete application will exit the School Lunch ELE process and follow the regular Medicaid application process.
- If there is a current pending application which is still in missing information status, that application is closed/dismissed and the Express Lane Application is processed for eligibility using the express process.
- The "screen and enroll" process including systemic verification procedures are subject to be processed timely within the 10 days case processing provisions.
- Express Lane processing is exempt from **PERM** review and will not be tabulated in any **PERM error** reporting.

### Reduced Price Lunch "B" Beneficiaries Process

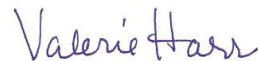
- Uninsured students on Reduced priced lunch will be mailed a **School Express Lane Application B**-coded to indicate **Reduced Price lunch uninsured student**. For purposes of this express lane eligibility processing and their school lunch status, their income is accepted as being greater than 133% FPL.
- Only if all of the questions on the application are answered will the application be automatically eligible for Plan B enrollment. The information on the application is self-declared with the exception of citizenship; by signing the application, the applicant attests that all information is true and certifies identity. The child is added to the eligibility file by the state vendor or the CWA if there is an open case at the county and given four months reasonable opportunity to prove citizenship/qualified immigrant status (U.S. citizenship status can be verified utilizing the SVES system).
- A  
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using electronic databases such as LOOPS, DABS and Wages. **If the parent, guardian, or custodial relative does not provide the optional SSN, which would be used to verify their income information, then their income is accepted as self-declared (based on their SLP status). A sampling of those self-declared families who had eligibility determined using SLP Express lane eligibility processing will be reviewed by the State's Quality Control Unit.**

- Any incomplete application will exit the Free and Reduced Price Lunch ELE process and follow the regular NJ FamilyCare application process.
- If there is a current pending application which is still in missing information status, that application is closed/dismissed and the Express Lane Application is processed for eligibility using the express process.
- The "screen and enroll" process including systemic verification procedures are subject to be processed timely within the 10 days case processing provisions.
- Express Lane processing is exempt from **PERM** review and will not be tabulated in any **PERM error** reporting.

If you have any questions regarding this Medicaid Communication, please refer them to the Division's Office of Eligibility Policy field service staff for your agency at 609-588-2556.

Sincerely,



Valerie Harr  
Director

VH:M

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