



HFS

Illinois Department of
Healthcare and Family Services

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HFS announces next steps for Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors program

With nearly 16,500 seniors now covered, temporary pause on new program enrollment to take effect in November

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) announced today that as the [Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors](#) program nears 16,500 individuals, a temporary pause on new enrollees will take effect Nov. 6.

HFS [previously announced](#) that new HBIS enrollment would be temporarily paused at 16,500 individuals, an enrollment benchmark the program is expected to reach in the coming weeks. Anyone who is already enrolled in the HBIS program and remains eligible for coverage will stay covered. The Department will not be removing any current enrollees who remain eligible for HBIS coverage.

The HBIS program provides Medicaid-like health care coverage to individuals aged 65 and older who would be eligible for Medicaid but for their immigration status, which launched in late 2020. The Department also operates the [Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults](#) program (HBIA), which provides similar coverage for individuals aged 42 to 64. Through the end of September, nearly 69,000 individuals are covered across the HBIA and HBIS programs.

HFS announced in June that new HBIS enrollment would be capped at 16,500 individuals, when the [Department filed emergency and regular rules](#) outlining a range of HBIA and HBIS program changes the state has implemented to bring program costs within the amount the General Assembly budgeted for State Fiscal Year 2024, which began July 1.

Compared with the traditional Medicaid population, month-over-month enrollment has grown at a higher rate, and per-enrollee costs have tracked higher among the

HBIA and HBIS-enrolled populations due to more prevalent, untreated chronic conditions and higher hospital costs, pushing the limit of the funds made available for these programs for the current fiscal year.

HFS understands that this program is a vital resource for individuals who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid but for their immigration status. The Department will continue to monitor the costs associated with the program and is committed to preserving this nation-leading program for the future.

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