

Health and Employment Counseling

Consumer Guide



Division of Medicaid Services
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HEC Questions?



Call 866-278-6440

Part I: Overview of HEC

What is Health and Employment Counseling (HEC)?

Health and Employment Counseling is a nine-month, pre-employment program for people with disabilities who are not employed, but want to enroll in the Medicaid Purchase Plan.

The Medicaid Purchase Plan allows people with disabilities who are employed or enrolled in HEC to get Medicaid coverage by paying a monthly premium, which is based on income. Individuals with low income may not have to pay a premium.

For more information about the Medicaid Purchase Plan, see the fact sheet: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/P-10071.htm.

When should I apply for the Medicaid Purchase Plan?

Apply for the Medicaid Purchase Plan before you start the HEC process. Contact an income maintenance worker who will help you apply for the plan and see whether you meet the eligibility requirements.

Also, to participate in HEC and MPP, the Disability Determination Bureau needs to determine that you have a disability. If you do not have a disability determination, the income maintenance worker will start your application.

To find the income maintenance agency near you, call 866-278-6440.

What is the definition of working?

The definition of working is part-time, paid employment, self-employment, employment at a sheltered workshop, or other. No minimum number of hours is required.

The income maintenance agency processing your Medicaid Purchase Plan application will

confirm that you are meeting the work requirement.

For more information about the Medicaid Purchase Plan eligibility requirements, contact your income maintenance worker.

How do I enroll in HEC?

To enroll in HEC, you will complete a HEC application, also called your employment plan.

You may write the employment plan on your own or with help from someone else, such as a case worker, benefits specialist, or vocational counselor. The employment plan includes sections on benefits counseling, employment barriers, and community resources.

The plan should include your employment goals and how you plan to achieve them within a nine-month timeframe.

After completing your plan, submit it to the HEC manager at the Department of Health Services for final approval.

If your employment plan (application) is approved, you will receive a letter confirming your enrollment in the program. **You must give a copy of this letter to your income maintenance worker as verification of your enrollment.**

It is your responsibility to use the resources you identified in your employment plan to achieve your employment goals. **At the end of nine months, you must be employed to continue participation in the Medicaid Purchase Plan.**

Part II: Completing the Employment Plan

The employment plan helps you organize your employment goals and identify things that may stand in your way.

If you need a blank copy of the employment plan, contact your income maintenance worker or call 866-278-6440 to request one.

There are eight sections to the employment plan. Fill out each section as completely as you can, and then send the completed plan to the HEC manager at the Department of Health Services for approval.

A. Employment Planning

To start off your employment plan, think about your career goals:

- What kind of job do you want?
- What skills do you have?
- What skills do you need to be successful at the job you identified?

You may also want to think about long-term career goals.

Remember, to continue in the Medicaid Purchase Plan, you need to be working within nine months of being approved for HEC.

B. Skills and Personality

Skills are things you do well. Your personality includes the qualities that describe you.

List your positive qualities and what you do well—those things that you think will help you be successful at the job of your choice.

C. Developing Skills

Think of the skills you already have but may want to improve. Write down the skills you need to work on that will help you get any of the jobs you are interested in.

D. Employment Barriers

If you got an offer today for your dream job, what would keep you from taking it? Those things are called employment barriers.

Some examples of barriers may be a limited work history, no reliable transportation, lack of skills training, or needing assistive technology.

Write down your employment barriers. Then think about what you need to do to overcome those barriers and list the steps to achieve that.

E. Barriers Team

A barriers team is a group of individuals that helps you move past those things that are stopping you from taking the job you want.

List the names of the people on your barriers team, their telephone numbers, and what role they will take in helping you overcome the barriers.

F. Benefits Counseling

The HEC program encourages you to have a benefits discussion with a work incentives benefits specialist before you start to work.

For example, you may want to talk about how the benefits you receive may be affected when you start a job and increase your earnings.

For additional information about your benefits, contact the following resources:

- **Social Security Administration**
800-772-1213 or www.ssa.gov
- **Local Housing Authority**
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/wi

Benefits Tips

Some things to think about:

- What kinds of benefits do you receive?
- How will each of those benefits change with increased earnings? What work incentives might be available?
- How will the Medicaid Purchase Plan affect your other benefits? For example, higher assets in the Medicaid Purchase Plan may decrease or eliminate other benefits.

G. Networking With Community Resources

Use this section of the employment plan to write down the resources you are working with or plan to contact to pursue your employment goals. Write down a contact name, agency name, and phone number for all agencies you are working with.

H. Creating a Plan

This is your plan of action to help you find and keep a job. In this section, you will write down the steps you need to take, the deadlines for each step, and who you need to talk to or work with to achieve employment.

For example, to learn more about your job goal, you may want to set up a meeting with someone in a job like the one you want to ask questions and get advice. You may need to take a class or figure out how to get to and from work.

Part III: Submitting the Application and Next Steps

Where to Send Your Application

Submit your signed, completed employment plan application to the HEC manager at the Department of Health Services.

The application can be mailed or faxed.

Mail or Fax Your Application

Mail

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
HEC Manager
1 West Wilson Street, Room 527
P.O. Box 7851
Madison, WI 53707-7851

Fax

608-223-7755

What to Expect Next

If your application is approved, you will receive a letter from the HEC manager.

If your application is not approved, you will receive a letter explaining why it was not approved. You can appeal this decision through the Medicaid appeals process if you disagree.

Your Responsibilities

After you receive an approval letter from the HEC manager, you have nine months to put your plan into action and find a job.

To complete your enrollment in the Medicaid Purchase Plan and begin receiving Medicaid, take your letter to your income maintenance worker. If you meet all of the eligibility requirements, you can participate.

When you get a job, you must report that to your income maintenance worker and the Department of Health Services HEC manager.

Part IV: Frequently Asked Questions

How long can I be enrolled in HEC?

You can be enrolled in the HEC program for up to nine months. At the end of nine months you must be working to continue to receive your Medicaid coverage through the Medicaid Purchase Plan. The nine-month enrollment period begins on the date DHS approves your application.

Important dates, including the start and end dates of your HEC participation period, will be included in the approval letter from the Department of Health Services.

In some cases, people may apply for a three-month extension. For example, if after six months they are not employed, but think they could be soon, they may want to apply for the extension.

You must apply for an extension before the end of the seventh month of HEC participation to prevent any gaps in your Medicaid coverage.

You may participate in HEC **two** times within a five-year period, but your participation periods must be at least six months apart.

Note: Any period of HEC enrollment, whether or not you use the entire nine months available, will count as one HEC period.

Why is HEC participation limited to nine months?

The HEC program is for people who can be employed within a short amount of time. If your employment goals will take longer than nine months to achieve, wait to apply for HEC when you are closer to achieving employment.

How do I get a disability determination?

If you do not have a disability determination from the Disability Determination Bureau, you will need to apply for it with your local county or tribal income maintenance office.

It sometimes takes a few months to obtain the determination, so the sooner you start the paperwork, the sooner you can participate in the Medicaid Purchase Plan.

What should I do when I become employed?

When you become employed during your HEC period, report this to your income maintenance worker and to the HEC manager at the Department of Health Services right away.