

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH P.O. Box 11729 Albany, NY 12211

Notice of Decision

Decision Date: June 5, 2017

NY State of Health Account ID: Appeal Identification Number: AP000000015719





On May 11, 2017, you appeared by telephone at a hearing on your appeal of NY State of Health's February 1, 2017 disenrollment notice and verbal denial of a special enrollment period.

The enclosed Decision, rendered after that hearing, is issued by the Appeals Unit of NY State of Health.

If you have questions about your Decision, you can contact us by:

- Calling the Customer Service Center at 1-855-355-5777
- Sending Mail to:

NY State of Health Appeals P.O. Box 11729 Albany, NY 12211

Sending a Fax to 1-855-900-5557

When contacting NY State of Health about your appeal and/or the Decision, please refer to the Appeal Identification number and the Account ID at the top of this notice.

Legal Authority

We are sending you this notice in accordance with 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 155.545.



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH P.O. Box 11729 Albany, NY 12211

Decision

Decision Date: June 5, 2017

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Appeal Identification Number: AP00000015719



Issues

The issues presented for review by the Appeals Unit of NY State of Health are:

Did NY State of Health properly terminate your enrollment in your qualified health plan effective January 1, 2017 because of non-payment of premiums?

Did NY State of Health properly determine that you do not qualify to enroll in a qualified health plan outside of the open enrollment period?

Procedural History

On October 21, 2016, NY State of Health (NYSOH) issued a renewal notice stating that you were eligible to receive an advanced premium tax credit (APTC) of up to \$289.73 per month and cost-sharing reductions if you enrolled in a silver-level qualified health plan, effective January 1, 2017. This notice also stated that you needed to select a qualified health plan for enrollment between November 16, 2016 and December 15, 2016 to continue your coverage.

On November 24, 2016, NYSOH issued a disenrollment notice stating that you were disenrolled from your Essential Plan, effective December 31, 2016.

On December 3, 2016, NYSOH issued a plan enrollment notice confirming your enrollment in a silver-level qualified health plan with APTC to be applied, both effective January 1, 2017.

On January 31, 2017, NYSOH issued a plan enrollment notice confirming your enrollment in a silver-level qualified health plan with the application of your APTC, effective February 1, 2017.

On February 1, 2017, NYSOH issued a disenrollment notice stating that you were disenrolled from your silver-level qualified health plan, effective January 1, 2017. This notice further stated that your coverage was ending because you did not pay your insurance bill by the payment deadline.

On or around February 2, 2017, you attempted to re-enroll into a silver-level qualified health plan, but were unable to.

On February 10, 2017, you spoke to NYSOH's Account Review Unit and requested an appeal insofar as you were not eligible to enroll in a health plan outside of the open enrollment period.

On February 11, 2017, NYSOH issued a notice to confirm your appeal request from the previous day. That notice stated that the reason for your appeal was "Denial of Special Enrollment Period "SEP"."

On May 11, 2017, you had a telephone hearing with a Hearing Officer from NYSOH's Appeals Unit. The record was developed during the hearing and the record was closed at the end of the hearing.

Findings of Fact

A review of the record supports the following findings of fact:

- 1) You testified that you are appealing the denial of a special enrollment period to enroll into a health plan through NYSOH.
- 2) On December 3, 2016, you enrolled into a silver-level qualified health plan.
- You testified that you attempted to pay your premium payment to your qualified health plan online by using your old ID number listed on your insurance card from 2016.
- 4) You further testified that you continued to log on to your online health insurance website by using your old ID number listed on your old insurance card and the website kept telling you that you were up to date with payments.
- 5) You testified that you are not sure if you ever received a new insurance card in the mail from your qualified health plan.

- 6) You testified that you contacted your qualified health plan on January 21, 2017 and were told that you had been disenrolled for nonpayment of insurance premiums.
- 7) You testified that you called NYSOH several times before January 31, 2017, but were told that you unable to reenroll into a plan because your qualified health plan had not yet sent the required paperwork to NYSOH showing that you had been disenrolled.
- 8) According to your NYSOH account, your qualified health plan was canceled effective January 1, 2017.
- 9) You testified that since enrolling into a qualified health on December 11, 2016 there have been no major changes to your household.
- 10) You testified that you are concerned about your tax penalty if you are unable to be enrolled into a qualified health plan for the remainder of 2017.

Conflicting evidence, if any, was considered and found to be less credible than the evidence noted above.

Applicable Law and Regulations

Appealable Issues

An applicant has the right to appeal to NYSOH's Appeals Unit: (1) an eligibility determination, including the amount of advance payments of the premium tax credit and level of cost-sharing reductions; (2) a redetermination of eligibility, including the amount of advance payments of the premium tax credit and level of cost-sharing reductions; (3) an eligibility determination for an exemption; (4) a failure by NYSOH to provide timely notice of an eligibility determination 45 CFR § 155.505; and (5) a denial of a request for a special enrollment period (45 CFR § 155.505(b)(1)(iii), 45 CFR § 155.305(b), and 45 CFR § 155.420(d)).

De Novo Review

NYSOH Appeals Unit must review each appeal de novo and "consider all relevant facts and evidence adduced during the appeals process" (45 CFR § 155.535(f)). "De novo review means a review of an appeal without deference to prior decisions in the case" (45 CFR § 155.500).

Enrollment in a Qualified Health Plan

NYSOH must provide annual open enrollment periods during which time qualified individuals may enroll in a qualified health plan and enrollees may change qualified health plans (45 CFR § 155.410(a)(1)).

For the benefit year beginning on January 1, 2017, the annual open enrollment period began on November 1, 2016, and extended through January 31, 2017 (45 CFR § 155.410(e)(2)).

Special Enrollment Periods

After each open enrollment period ends, NYSOH provides special enrollment periods to qualified individuals. During a special enrollment period, a qualified individual may enroll in a qualified health plan, and an enrollee may change their enrollment to another plan. This is generally permitted when one of the following triggering events occur:

- (1) The qualified individual or his or her dependent either:
 - (i) Loses minimum essential coverage.
 - (ii) Is enrolled in any non-calendar year group health plan or individual health insurance coverage, even if the qualified individual or his or her dependent has the option to renew such coverage.
 - (iii) Loses pregnancy-related coverage.
 - (iv) Loses medically needy coverage as described under section 1902(a)(10)(C) of the Social Security Act only once per calendar year.
- (2)(i) The qualified individual gains a dependent or becomes a dependent through marriage, birth, adoption, placement for adoption, or placement in foster care, or through a child support order or other court order.
 - (ii) the enrollee loses a dependent or is no longer considered a dependent through divorce or legal separation as defined by State law in the State in which the divorce or legal separation occurs, or if the enrollee, or his or her dependent, dies.
- (3) The qualified individual, or his or her dependent, becomes newly eligible for enrollment in a qualified health plan because he or she gains citizenship, status as a national, or lawful present or is no longer incarcerated.

- (4) The qualified individual's or his or her dependent's, enrollment or nonenrollment in a qualified health plan is unintentional, inadvertent, or erroneous and is the result of the error, misrepresentation, misconduct, or inaction of an officer, employee, or agent of NYSOH, its instrumentalities, or a non-NYSOH entity providing enrollment assistance or conducting enrollment activities.
- (5) The enrollee or, his or her dependent adequately demonstrates to NYSOH that the qualified health plan in which he or she is enrolled substantially violated a material provision of its contract in relation to the enrollee:
- (6) The enrollee or enrollee's dependent is newly eligible or ineligible for advance payments of the premium tax credit, or change in eligibility for cost-sharing reductions.
- (7) The qualified individual or enrollee, or his or her dependent, gains access to new qualified health plan as a result of a permanent move and either—
 - (i) Had minimum essential coverage for one or more days during the 60 days preceding the date of the permanent move, or
 - (ii) Was living outside of the United States or in a United States territory at the time of the permanent move;
- (8) The qualified individual or dependent who gains or maintains status as an Indian may enroll in a qualified health plan or change from one plan to another, once per month.
- (9) The qualified individual or enrollee, or his or her dependent, demonstrates to the Exchange, in accordance with guidelines issued by HHS, that the individual meets other exceptional circumstances as the Exchange may provide;
- (10) A qualified individual or enrollee—
 - (i) Is a victim of domestic abuse or spousal abandonment, including a dependent or unmarried victim within a household, is enrolled in minimum essential coverage and seeks to enroll in coverage separate from the perpetrator of the abuse or abandonment; or
 - (ii) Is a dependent of a victim of domestic abuse or spousal abandonment, on the same application as the victim, may enroll in coverage at the same time as the victim;

(11) A qualified individual or dependent—

- (i) Applies for coverage through NYSOH during the annual open enrollment period or due to a qualifying event, is assessed as potentially eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus and is determined ineligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus either after open enrollment has ended or more than 60 days after the qualifying event; or
- (ii) Applies for coverage at their Local Department of Social Services or Human Resources Administration during the annual open enrollment period, and is determined ineligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus after open enrollment has ended;
- (12) The qualified individual or enrollee, or his or her dependent, adequately demonstrates to NYSOH that a material error related to plan benefits, service area, or premium influenced the qualified individual's or enrollee's decision to purchase a qualified health plan; or
- (13) At the option of NYSOH, the qualified individual provides satisfactory documentary evidence to verify his or her eligibility for an insurance affordability program or enrollment following termination of enrollment due to a failure to verify such status within 90 days.

(45 CFR § 155.420(d)).

Generally, if a triggering life event occurs, the qualified individual or enrollee has 60 days from the date of a triggering event to select a qualified health plan (45 CFR § 155.420(c)(1)).

Legal Analysis

The first issue under review is whether NYSOH properly terminated your enrollment in your qualified health plan because of non-payment of premiums, effective January 1, 2017.

The record reflects that you were enrolled in a qualified health plan effective January 1, 2017. However, you testified that you attempted to pay your premium by using your old ID number on your insurance card from the 2016 insurance year, but were unable to do so because your health insurance account was saying that you were up to date with your premium payments. You further testified that by the time you contacted your insurance company on January 21, 2017, you were told that you had been disenrolled for nonpayment.

On February 1, 2017, NYSOH issued a notice stating that you were disenrolled from your health plan for nonpayment of the premium effective January 1, 2017.

NYSOH Appeals Unit only has the authority to review issues related to the following: (1) an eligibility determination, including the amount of advance payments of the premium tax credit and level of cost-sharing reductions, (2) a redetermination of eligibility, including the amount of advance payments of the premium tax credit and level of cost-sharing reductions, (3) an eligibility determination for an exemption, (4) a failure to provide timely notice of an eligibility determination and (5) a denial of a special enrollment period.

Since the Appeals Unit is not given the authority to review termination of enrollment due to nonpayment of premiums, we cannot reach the merits as to whether or not you were properly terminated from your health plan for nonpayment of premiums. Therefore, your appeal of the February 1, 2017 disenrollment notice is DISMISSED as a non-appealable issue.

The second issue under review is whether NYSOH properly determined that you do not qualify to enroll in a qualified health plan outside of the open enrollment period.

You testified that you are appealing the denial of a special enrollment period to enroll into a health plan through NYSOH. However, the record does not contain a notice of eligibility determination or redetermination on the issue of special enrollment period.

Here, the lack of a notice of eligibility determination on the issue of special enrollment periods does not prevent the Appeals Unit from reaching the merits of the case or constitute material error. Under 45 CFR § 155.505(b), you are as entitled to appeal NYSOH failure to timely issue a notice of eligibility determination as you are to appeal an adverse notice of eligibility determination. Your credible testimony along with the February 11, 2017 appeal confirmation notice stating that the reason for your appeal was "Denial of Special Enrollment Period "SEP"", permits an inference that NYSOH did deny your special enrollment request.

Since the Appeals Unit's review of NYSOH determinations is performed on a de novo basis, no deference would have been granted to the eligibility determination notice had it been issued.

NYSOH provided an open enrollment period from November 1, 2016 until January 31, 2017. On December 2, 2016, you enrolled into a silver-level qualified health plan. However, you were subsequently disenrolled on January 1, 2017 due to nonpayment of the premium payment. On or around February 2, 2017, you attempted to reenroll into a qualified health plan, but were unable to do so.

Once the annual open enrollment period ends, a health plan enrollee must qualify for a special enrollment period in order to enroll in, or change to another health plan offered through NYSOH. In order to qualify for a special enrollment period, a person must experience a triggering event.

The loss of health insurance coverage cannot be considered a triggering event for a special enrollment period because it was the result of nonpayment of your premiums.

However, a special enrollment period can also be granted if a qualified individual's enrollment or non-enrollment in a qualified health plan is unintentional, inadvertent, or erroneous and is the result of the error, misrepresentation, misconduct, or inaction of an officer, employee, or agent of NYSOH, its instrumentalities, or a non-NYSOH entity providing enrollment assistance or conducting enrollment activities.

You testified that on January 21, 2017, you contacted your qualified health plan and were told that you had been disenrolled for nonpayment of your premiums. You further testified that, prior to January 31, 2017, you made multiple telephone calls to NYSOH to try and reenroll into your qualified health plan, but the NYSOH representative told you that they were unable to reenroll you in your qualified health plan because your health plan had not yet sent over the paperwork showing that you had been disenrolled, and that once that paperwork was received it would be promptly processed and you would be able to reenroll. On February 1, 2017, NYSOH issued a disenrollment notice which stated that you were disenrolled from your qualified health plan as of January 1, 2017. Once you received this notice, you testified that you attempted to reenroll into your qualified health plan, but were unable to do so because you were outside of the open enrollment period.

Since the record indicates that your inability to reenroll into you qualified health plan was the direct result of inactions by an officer, employee, or agent of NYSOH or its instrumentalities, here the qualified health plan, you should have been granted a special enrollment period as of January 21, 2017; the date you were told by your qualified health plan that you were disenrolled from your plan due to nonpayment of premiums.

Therefore, NYSOH's verbal determination that you do not qualify to select a health plan outside of the open enrollment period for 2017 is incorrect, you should have been eligible for a special enrollment period as of January 21, 2017.

Your case is RETURNED to NYSOH to assist you in enrolling into a qualified health plan. You may choose to enroll into a qualified health plan as of January 21, 2017, which would result in a March 1, 2017 enrollment start date, because your inability to reenroll into a plan during open enrollment period was the due to

the inaction of NYSOH or its instrumentalities. In the alternative, you may elect to enroll into coverage within 60 days from the date of this decision.

You testified that you are concerned about being exposed to a tax penalty for not having health insurance for the requisite number of months in 2017. The record indicates that the qualified health plan's unexplained delay in processing your disenrollment with NYSOH and NYSOH's failure to grant you a special enrollment period resulted in you being without insurance coverage for part of the 2017 coverage year.

Sometimes after an appeal decision, an appellant can claim an exemption from the requirement to have health insurance. You might qualify for a health coverage exemption in 2017 if you didn't have health coverage while you were waiting for an appeal decision about coverage eligibility or savings and your appeal was eventually successful.

You must claim this exemption through the <u>United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)</u>. Currently, NYSOH does not accept hardship exemption applications.

You will find the information you need to claim the exemption due to an appeal decision at https://www.healthcare.gov/exemptions-tool/#/results/2016/details/eligible-based-on-appeal. You can also call 1-800-318-2596.

<u>Important:</u> If you do not get a response from HHS to your exemption application in time to file your tax return, write the word "pending" in column "c" and file your return. If HHS does not approve your exemption, you will need to file an amended return later.

Decision

Your appeal of the February 1, 2017 disenrollment notice is DISMISSED as a non-appealable issue.

NYSOH's verbal determination that you do not qualify to select a health plan outside of the open enrollment period for 2017 is incorrect. You should have been eligible for a special enrollment period as of January 21, 2017, but for the qualified health plan's unexplained delay in processing your disenrollment with NYSOH.

Your case is RETURNED to NYSOH to assist you in enrolling into a qualified health plan. You may choose to enroll into a qualified health plan as of January 21, 2017, which would result in a March 1, 2017 enrollment start date, because your inability to reenroll into a plan during open enrollment period was the due to

the inaction of NYSOH or its instrumentalities. In the alternative, you may elect to enroll into coverage within 60 days from the date of this decision.

Effective Date of this Decision: June 5, 2017

How this Decision Affects Your Eligibility

NYSOH improperly denied you a special enrollment period.

Your case is being sent back to NYSOH to allow you to enroll into coverage as of January 21, 2017, if you so choose. In the alternative, you may elect to enroll into coverage within 60 days from the date of this decision.

You will be responsible for any premium payments for the months you are enrolled into coverage.

If You Disagree with this Decision (Appeal Rights)

This Decision is final unless you submit an appeal request to the Federal Marketplace or bring a lawsuit under New York Civil Practice Law and Rules, Article 78.

You may bring a lawsuit on any Appeals Unit decision in New York State court in accordance with Article 78 of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules. This must be done within four months of the Decision Date, which appears on the first page of this Decision.

Additionally, Appeals Unit decisions on issues involving eligibility for qualified health plans, advance premium tax credits, and cost-sharing reductions may be appealed to the Federal Marketplace. This must be done within 30 days of the Decision Date, which appears on the first page of this Decision (45 CFR § 155.520(c)).

If you have questions about appealing to the Federal Marketplace, you can contact them in any of the following ways:

- By calling the Customer Service Center at 1-800-318-2596
- By mail at:

Health Insurance Marketplace Attn: Appeals 465 Industrial Blvd. London, KY 40750-0061 • By fax: 1-877-369-0129

If you wish to be represented by an attorney in bringing an outside appeal and do not know how to go about getting one, you may contact legal resources available to you. You may, for example, contact the local County Bar Association, Legal Aid, or Legal Services.

If You Have Questions about this Decision (Customer Service Resources):

You can contact us in any of the following ways:

- By calling the Customer Service Center at 1-855-355-5777
- By mail at:

NY State of Health Appeals P.O. Box 11729 Albany, NY 12211

• By fax: 1-855-900-5557

Summary

Your appeal of the February 1, 2017 disenrollment notice is DISMISSED as a non-appealable issue.

NYSOH's verbal determination that you do not qualify to select a health plan outside of the open enrollment period for 2017 is incorrect. You should have been eligible for a special enrollment period as of January 21, 2017, but for the qualified health plan's unexplained delay in processing your disenrollment with NYSOH.

Your case is RETURNED to NYSOH to assist you in enrolling into a qualified health plan. You may choose to enroll into a qualified health plan as of January 21, 2017, which would result in a March 1, 2017 enrollment start date, because your inability to reenroll into a plan during open enrollment period was the due to the inaction of NYSOH or its instrumentalities. In the alternative, you may elect to enroll into coverage within 60 days from the date of this decision.

NYSOH improperly denied you a special enrollment period.

Your case is being sent back to NYSOH to allow you to enroll into coverage as of January 21, 2017, if you so choose. In the alternative, you may elect to enroll into coverage within 60 days from the date of this decision.

You will be responsible for any premium payments for the months you are enrolled into coverage.

Legal Authority

We are issuing this determination in accordance with 45 CFR § 155.545.

A Copy of this Decision Has Been Provided To:



Getting Help in a Language Other than English

This is an important document. If you need help to understand it, please call 1-855-355-5777. We can give you an interpreter for free in the language you speak.

Español (Spanish)

Este es un documento importante. Si necesita ayuda para entenderlo, llame al 1-855-355-5777. Le proporcionaremos un intérprete sin ningún costo.

中文 (Traditional Chinese)

這是重要的文件。 如果您需要獲得關於瞭解文件內容方面的協助,請致電 1-855-355-5777。我們可以為您免費提供您所使用語言的翻譯人員。

Kreyòl Ayisyen (Haitian Creole)

Sa a se yon dokiman ki enpòtan. Si ou bezwen èd pou konprann li, tanpri rele nimewo 1-855-355-5777. Nou kapab ba ou yon entèprèt gratis nan lang ou pale a.

中文 (Simplified Chinese)

这是一份重要的文件。如果您需要帮助理解此文件,请打电话至 **1-855-355-5777**。我们可以为您免费提供相应语种的口译服务。

Italiano (Italian)

Questo è un documento importante. Per qualsiasi chiarimento può chiamare il numero 1-855-355-5777. Possiamo metterle a disposizione un interprete nella sua lingua.

한국어 (Korean)

중요한 서류입니다. 이해하는 데 도움이 필요하시면 1-855-355-5777 번으로 연락해 주십시오. 귀하의 언어에 대한 무료 통역 서비스가 제공됩니다.

Русский (Russian)

Это важный документ. Если Вам нужна помощь для понимания этого документа, позвоните по телефону 1-855-355-5777. Мы можем бесплатно предоставить Вам переводчика Вашего языка.

(Arabic)العربية

هذه وثيقة مهمة. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة لفهم محتواها، يُرجى الاتصال بالرقم 5777-355-855-1. يُمكننا توفير مترجم فوري لك باللغة التي تتحدثها مجانًا.

□□□□□ (Bengali)

Français (French)

Ceci est un document important. Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour en comprendre le contenu, appelez le 1-855-355-5777. Nous pouvons mettre gratuitement à votre disposition un interprète dans votre langue.

हिंदी (Hindi)

यह एक महत्वपूर्ण दस्तावेज़ है। अगर आपको इसे समझने में सहायता चाहिए, तो कृपया 1-855-355-5777 पर कॉल करें। हम आपकी भाषा बोलने वाला एक दुभाषिया निःशुल्क उपलब्ध करवा सकते हैं।

日本語 (Japanese)

これは重要な書類です。理解するために支援が必要な場合は、1-855-355-5777 にお電話ください。通訳を無料で提供いたします。

नेपाली (Nepali)

यो एउटा महत्त्वपूर्ण कागजात हो। यसलाई बुझ्न तपाईंलाई मद्दत चाहिन्छ भने, कृपया 1-855-355-5777 मा फोन गर्नुहोस्। हामीले तपाईंले बोल्ने भाषामा तपाईंलाई निःशुल्क दोभाषे उपलब्ध गराउन सक्छौं।

Polski (Polish)

To jest ważny dokument. W przypadku konieczności skorzystania z pomocy w celu zrozumienia jego treści należy zadzwonić pod numer 1-855-355-5777. Istnieje możliwość uzyskania bezpłatnej usługi tłumacza języka, którym się posługujesz.

Twi (Twi)

Krataa yi ye tow krataa a ho hia. Se wo hia eho nkyerekyeremu a, ye sre wo, fre 1-855-355-5777. yebetumi ama wo obi a okyere kasa a woka no ase ama wo kwa a wontua hwee.

اردو(Urdu<u>)</u>

یہ ایک اہم دستاویز ہے۔ اگر آپ کو اسے سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم5777-355-485-1 پر کال کریں۔ ہم آپ کو آپ کی مادری زبان میں ایک مفت مترجہ فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese)

Đây là tài liệu quan trọng. Nếu quý vị cần trợ giúp để hiểu tài liệu này, vui lòng gọi 1-855-355-5777. Chúng tôi có thể cung cấp thông dịch viên miễn phí nói ngôn ngữ của quý vị.

אידיש (Yiddish)

טיין, ביטע רופט 1-855-355-5777. מיר קענען אייך	דאס איז א וויכטיגער דאקומענט. אויב איר דארפט הילף עס צו פארש געבן א דאלמעטשער פריי פון אפצאל אין די שפראך וואס איר רעדט.