

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PO Box 11729 Albany, NY 12211

# Notice of Decision

Decision Date: January 24, 2018

NY State of Health Account ID
Appeal Identification Number: AP00000023594



On December 14, 2017, you appeared by telephone at a hearing on your appeal of NY State of Health's September 11, 2017 enrollment notice, October 10, 2017 disenrollment notice and October 22, 2017 eligibility determination notice.

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 PO 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(b).



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PO Box 11729 Albany, NY 12211

## Decision

Decision Date: January 24, 2018

NY State of Health Account ID
Appeal Identification Number: AP00000023594



#### Issues

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

Did NY State of Health (NYSOH) properly determine that your enrollment in a qualified health plan was effective August 1, 2017, rather than September 1, 2017?

Does NYSOH have the authority to review whether you were properly terminated from your qualified health plan for non-payment of premium, effective August 31, 2017?

Did NYSOH properly determine that you did not qualify to enroll in a qualified health plan outside of the open enrollment period, effective December 1, 2017?

# **Procedural History**

On July 30, 2017, NYSOH received your initial application for financial assistance with health insurance.

On July 31, 2017, NYSOH issued an eligibility determination notice stating that you were found eligible to purchase a qualified health plan (QHP) at full cost through NYSOH. This eligibility determination was effective September 1, 2017.

On September 11, 2017, NYSOH issued an enrollment notice confirmation your selection of a bronze-level QHP as of September 10, 2017. The notice stated

that your coverage under this QHP would begin effective August 1, 2017, with a monthly premium of \$399.59.

On October 10, 2017, NYSOH issued a disenrollment notice stating that your bronze-level QHP coverage would end effective August 31, 2017 because you did not pay your insurance bill by the payment deadline.

On October 21, 2017, NYSOH received an update to your application for financial assistance with health insurance. In response to this application, NYSOH prepared a preliminary eligibility determination stating that you were not eligible for financial assistance.

Also on October 21, 2017, you spoke to NYSOH's Account Review Unit and appealed the effective date of coverage through your QHP, insofar as your coverage became effective prior to September 1, 2017, which ultimately caused your disenrollment due to failure to pay premiums.

On October 22, 2017, NYSOH issued an eligibility determination notice stating that you were found eligible to purchase a qualified health plan at full cost through NYSOH. However, the notice also stated that you may be eligible to enroll in coverage if you qualify for a special enrollment period. This eligibility determination was effective December 1, 2017.

On December 14, 2017, you had a telephone hearing with a Hearing Officer from NYSOH's Appeals Unit. The record was developed during the hearing and held open to allow you to submit supporting documents.

On December 16, 2017, NYSOH received your documentation and it was incorporated into the record as Appellant's Exhibit #1. The record was then closed.

# **Findings of Fact**

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

- 1) Your initial application for health insurance was received by NYSOH on July 30, 2017.
- 2) You testified you completed the application yourself online.
- 3) That application indicated you lost your prior health coverage on July 31, 2017.
- 4) You testified that you lost your health insurance offered under your parents' health insurance plan effective July 31, 2017 due to aging out.

- 5) You testified, and your NYSOH account reflects, that you turned on ...
- 6) Based on your application submitted on July 30, 2017, you were found eligible to enroll in a QHP effective September 1, 2017.
- 7) You testified, and your account confirms, you selected a health plan online on September 10, 2017.
- 8) You testified that you believed that based on the eligibility determination notice, you selected your QHP to have such coverage begin on September 1, 2017.
- 9) NYSOH issued an enrollment notice on September 11, 2017 confirming you were enrolled in a QHP. The notice indicated the coverage through this plan became effective August 1, 2017.
- You testified that you paid your first month's premium believe that this amount would be applied to your coverage during September 2017. However, you testified that this amount was applied to coverage during August 2017.
- 11) You testified that because of your premium amount begin applied to coverage during August 2017, rather than September 2017, you were inadvertently disenrolled from your bronze-level QHP coverage effective August 31, 2017.
- 12) You testified, and your NYSOH account reflects, that you updated your account on October 21, 2017 to seek reinstatement of your coverage; however, you could not reenroll in a plan at that time since NYSOH determined that you did not qualify for a special enrollment period.
- 13) You testified that you were no longer seeking reinstatement of your coverage during 2017 since the plan year was over, but rather looking to avoid being subject to a tax penalty during 2017 since you were not covered under a plan from September 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017.
- 14) On December 16, 2017, you provided to NYSOH Appeals Unit a letter issued by 2017, reflecting that your coverage under your parents' health plan ended effective July 31, 2017 due to "[I]oss of dependent child status."

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) a failure by NYSOH to provide timely notice of an eligibility determination 45 CFR § 155.505; and (4) 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 QHP and enrollees may change QHPs (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. NYSOH has not elected to adopt this subsection at this time.

(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)).

However, a loss of health insurance coverage such as that referenced above does not include,

"voluntary termination of coverage or other loss due to-

- (1) Failure to pay premiums on a timely basis, including COBRA premiums prior to expiration of COBRA coverage, or
- (2) Situations allowing for a rescission as specified in 45 CFR [§] 147.128" such as failure to comply with other requirements (45 CFR § 147.128(b))

(45 CFR § 155.420(e)).

# Legal Analysis

The first issue under review is whether NYSOH properly determined that your enrollment in a QHP became effective August 1, 2017, rather than September 1, 2017.

NYSOH provided an open enrollment period from November 1, 2016 until January 31, 2017. The record indicates that you submitted an application on July 30, 2017. Therefore, you did not complete your application during the open enrollment period. However, in the July 30, 2017 application, you indicated that your prior health insurance ended on July 31, 2017. Loss of minimum essential coverage is considered a triggering life event.

Pursuant to the regulations, when a triggering life event occurs, the qualified individual has sixty days from the date of that event to select a qualified health plan. Accordingly, you were given a special enrollment period until September 29, 2017 to select a plan, which you did on September 10, 2017. On September 11, 2017, NYSOH issued an enrollment confirmation notice stating that your enrollment in your QHP was effective as of August 1, 2017.

In accordance with the above cited regulations, when an individual loses minimum essential coverage and is found eligible for a special enrollment period, if they select a plan before their prior coverage ends, the plan can be effective on the first day of the month following the month when coverage was lost. In your case, since you applied before July 31, 2017, your QHP coverage properly began effective August 1, 2017.

Accordingly, the September 11, 2017 enrollment notice stating your coverage through your QHP became effective August 1, 2017 was correct, and must be AFFIRMED.

The second issue under review is whether NYSOH has the authority to review whether you were properly terminated from your QHP for non-payment of premium effective, August 31, 2017.

On September 10, 2017, you were enrolled in a qualified health plan with a monthly premium of \$399.59, effective August 1, 2017.

You testified that because of your premium amount begin applied to coverage during August 2017, rather than September 2017, you were inadvertently disenrolled from your bronze-level QHP coverage effective August 31, 2017.

On October 10, 2017, NYSOH issued a notice stating that you were disenrolled from your health plan for non-payment of the premium, effective August 31, 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) a failure to provide timely notice of an eligibility determination, and (4) a denial of a special enrollment period.

Since the Appeals Unit is not given the authority to review termination of enrollment due to non-payment of premiums, we cannot reach the merits as to whether you were properly terminated from your health plan for non-payment of premiums. Therefore, your appeal of the October 10, 2017 disenrollment notice is DISMISSED as a non-appealable issue.

The third issue under review is whether NYSOH properly determined that you do not qualify to enroll in a QHP outside of the open enrollment period, effective December 1, 2017.

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. Since the Appeals Unit 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 October 21, 2017, you submitted a request to reenroll in a QHP.

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

In the present case, there is no evidence in the record to establish grounds for a special enrollment period. The record reflects that there have been no changes to your household in 2017.

Although you did lose health coverage as a result of the August 31, 2017 disenrollment, the loss of health insurance coverage in this case cannot be considered a triggering event for a special enrollment period, because it was a result of non-payment of your premiums which NYSOH considers a voluntary action causing the termination of your coverage.

The credible evidence of record indicates that, since the open enrollment period closed on January 31, 2017, you did not experience a triggering event that would qualify you for a special enrollment period as of the date of the hearing.

Therefore, the October 22, 2017 eligibility determination notice, to the extent it denied you a special enrollment period, was correct and is AFFIRMED.

# Decision

The September 11, 2017 enrollment notice is AFFRIMED.

Your appeal of the October 10, 2017 disenrollment notice is DISMISSED as a non-appealable issue.

The October 22, 2017 eligibility determination notice is AFFIRMED.

Effective Date of this Decision: January 24, 2018

# **How this Decision Affects Your Eligibility**

You do not qualify for a special enrollment period at this time. Your bronze-level QHP coverage began effective August 1, 2017, and was terminated effective August 31, 2017.

You do not qualify for a special enrollment period at this time.

This decision relates to your eligibility for financial assistance for 2017 ONLY. You must update your NYSOH application to find out your eligibility for financial assistance for 2018. Your application and enrollment in a plan must be completed by December 15, 2017 for any changes to be in effect for January 1, 2018. Open enrollment for 2018 coverage ends on January 31, 2018.

# If You Disagree with this Decision (Appeal Rights)

If applicable, if you think a portion of your appeal should not be dismissed, you can ask us to vacate, or cancel, this dismissal. You must ask us in writing within 30 days after the date on this notice, showing good cause as to why the dismissal should be vacated. NYSOH's Appeals Unit will review your request. If your request is approved, another hearing will be scheduled for you. If your request is denied, NYSOH will tell you in writing. If you do not respond to the dismissed portion of your appeal within 30 days, your appeal will remain dismissed, and NYSOH will take no further action on your appeal.

Insofar as your case was decided, the 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 PO Box 11729 Albany, NY 12211

• By fax: 1-855-900-5557

# **Summary**

The September 11, 2017 enrollment notice is AFFRIMED.

Your appeal of the October 10, 2017 disenrollment notice is DISMISSED as a non-appealable issue.

The October 22, 2017 eligibility determination notice is AFFIRMED.

Your bronze-level QHP coverage began effective August 1, 2017, and was terminated effective August 31, 2017.

You do not qualify for a special enrollment period at this time.

This decision relates to your eligibility for financial assistance for 2017 ONLY. You must update your NYSOH application to find out your eligibility for financial assistance for 2018. Your application and enrollment in a plan must be completed by December 15, 2017 for any changes to be in effect for January 1, 2018. Open enrollment for 2018 coverage ends on January 31, 2018.

# **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.

# <u>中文 (Traditional Chinese)</u>

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 تتحدثما محانًا

#### বাংলা (Bengali)

এটি এক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নথি। এটি বুঝতে আপনার যদি সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে, অনুগ্রহ করে 1-855-355-5777 নম্বরে কল করুন। আপনি যে ভাষায় কথা বলেন বিনামূল্যে আমরা আপনাকে একজন দোভাষী দিতে পারি।

# 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 द्भाषिया निःश्ल्क 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 नि:शुल्क 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 yε tow krataa a ho hia. Sε wo hia εho nkyerεkyerεmu a, yε srε wo, frε 1-855-355-5777. yεbεtumi ama wo obi a ɔkyerε 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 کرم5777-355-855-1 پر کال کریں۔ ہم آپ کو آپ کی مادری زبان میں ایک مفت مترجم فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

# <u>Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese)</u>

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)

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