

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

Notice of Decision

Decision Date: April 20, 2018

NY State of Health Account ID: [REDACTED]

Appeal Identification Number: AP000000028650

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On April 9, 2018, you appeared by telephone at a hearing on your appeal of NY State of Health's 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.

If you need this information in a language other than English or you need assistance reading this notice, we can help you. Call 1-855-355-5777 (TTY - English: 1-800-662-1220) (TTY - Spanish: 1-877-662-4886).

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Decision

Decision Date: April 20, 2018

NY State of Health Account ID: [REDACTED]

Appeal Identification Number: AP000000028650

[REDACTED]

Issue

The issue presented for review by the Appeals Unit of NY State of Health is:

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

Procedural History

On April 8, 2014, you created an online account with username [REDACTED]" and you were assigned account number [REDACTED]

On September 5, 2017, you created an online account with the username [REDACTED] and you were assigned account number [REDACTED]

On January 30, 2018, you created an online account with the username [REDACTED] and you were assigned account number [REDACTED]

On February 5, 2018, NYSOH received your application for health insurance in [REDACTED]

On February 6, 2018, NYSOH issued an eligibility determination notice stating that you were eligible to receive an advance premium tax credit of up to \$123.00 per month, effective March 1, 2018 in [REDACTED]. It further stated that you may be able to enroll in coverage if you qualify for a Special Enrollment period.

If you need this information in a language other than English or you need assistance reading this notice, we can help you. Call 1-855-355-5777 (TTY - English: 1-800-662-1220) (TTY - Spanish: 1-877-662-4886).

On February 8, 2018, you spoke to NYSOH's Account Review Unit and appealed insofar as you were not eligible to enroll in a health plan outside of the open enrollment period.

On February 9, 2018, NYSOH issued a notice to confirm your appeal request from the previous day in [REDACTED]. That notice stated that the reason for your appeal was "[D]enial of Special Enrollment Period (SEP)."

On April 9, 2018, you had a telephone hearing with a Hearing Officer from NYSOH's Appeals Unit. The record was developed during the hearing and closed that day.

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) The record reflects that you have three separate NYSOH accounts:
 - a. One account, [REDACTED], is active. All of your eligibility determination notices were issued to this account.
 - b. The second account, [REDACTED], is inactive and was created on January 30, 2018. This account shows that your address and identity was verified however an application was not completed. There were no eligibility determinations issued to this account.
 - c. The third account, [REDACTED], is also inactive and was created on September 5, 2015. This account does not have a completed application associated with it and there were no eligibility determinations issued to this account.
- 3) You testified that you were having trouble applying for insurance online through the NYSOH in January 2018 and was unable to pick a plan.
- 4) You testified that at the end of January, before the open enrollment deadline, you called NYSOH, advised the representative of your inability to complete an application and enroll in a plan. You testified that you were given confirmation [REDACTED] to prove that you attempted to apply for health insurance before the close of the open enrollment deadline. You testified that you were told that this confirmation would ensure that you could enroll in a plan after the open enrollment deadline had passed. You were also told that you would receive a call back from NYSOH within five days to assist you with your issue; however, you did not receive a call back.

- 5) You testified that when you were having trouble completing the application for health insurance online, the website referred you to an application counselor to assist you with your application.
- 6) On February 5, 2018, your certified application counselor submitted an application for health insurance on your behalf.
- 7) A review of the phone call on February 5, 2018, confirms that you and your certified application counselor contacted the NYSOH to follow-up on your application and enroll in a plan. Although the NYSOH representative confirmed that she could see that you called on January 29 and January 30, 2018, there was no record of the confirmation number you received nor were there any notes to reflect the outcome of your calls from January 2018. You were advised that you could not pick a plan because you were outside the of the open enrollment period.

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

Applicable Law and Regulations

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, 2018, the national annual open enrollment period began on November 1, 2017 and extended through December 15, 2017 (45 CFR § 155.410(e)(3)). NY State extended this enrollment period through January 31, 2018 for applications processed through NYSOH (https://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2017/2017-09-07_open_enrollment_dates.htm).

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 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.
- (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; (Guidance for Issues on Special Enrollment Cases, dated March 26, 2014, Department of Health & Human Services Found here: <https://www.cms.gov/ccio/resources/regulations-and-guidance/downloads/complex-cases-sep-3-26-2014.pdf>)

(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)).

Legal Analysis

The 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 qualifying for a 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. 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 9, 2018 appeal confirmation notice stating that the reason for your appeal was “[D]enial of Special Enrollment Period (SEP)”, permits an inference that NYSOH did deny your special enrollment request.

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, 2017 until January 31, 2018. On February 5, 2018, you submitted an application for health insurance and requested to enroll in a qualified health plan. On February 6, 2018 NYSOH issued a notice stating that you were eligible to receive an advance premium tax credit of up to \$123.00 per month, effective March 1, 2018. It further stated that you may be able to enroll in coverage if you qualify for a special enrollment period.

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 in NYSOH. In order to qualify for a special enrollment period, a person must experience a triggering event.

A special enrollment period can 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 you were having trouble applying for insurance online through the NYSOH in January 2018. The record confirms that on January 30, 2018, you created an online account with the username [REDACTED] and you were assigned account number [REDACTED]. This account reflects that an application was not completed on that day.

You credibly testified that at the end of January, before the open enrollment deadline, you called NYSOH, advised the representative of your inability to complete an application and enroll in a plan. You testified that you were given confirmation # [REDACTED] to prove that you attempted to apply for health insurance before the close of the open enrollment deadline to ensure that you would be able to enroll in a plan outside of the open enrollment period. You testified that you were told that you would receive a call back from NYSOH within five days to assist you with your issue; however, you did not receive a call back.

Although, there were no phone recordings found for January 2018 with the NYSOH, a review of the phone call on February 5, 2018, confirms a NYSOH representative could see that you called on January 29 and January 30, 2018. The NYSOH representative could not find a record of the confirmation number you received or any notes to reflect the outcome of your calls in January.

Since the record confirms your attempt to access your account on January 30, 2018 under account number [REDACTED] and the phone record on February 5, 2018 confirms that you contacted the NYSOH on January 29 and January 30, 2018, the Appeals Unit finds that your non-enrollment into a qualified health plan unintentional, inadvertent, or erroneous and the direct result of statements made to you by a representative of NYSOH. Therefore, you should have been granted a special enrollment period as of your February 5, 2018 application.

Therefore, NYSOH's verbal determination that you do not qualify to select a health plan outside of the open enrollment period is incorrect, you should have been eligible for a special enrollment period as of the date of your February 5, 2018 application.

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 February 5, 2018 because NYSOH gave you incorrect information. In the alternative, you may elect to enroll into coverage within 60 days from the date of this decision.

Decision

NYSOH's verbal determination that you do not qualify to select a health plan outside of the open enrollment period is incorrect, you should have been eligible for a special enrollment period as of the date of your February 5, 2018 application.

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 February 5, 2018, if 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 premium payments for any months you are enrolled into coverage.

Effective Date of this Decision: April 20, 2018

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 February 5, 2018, 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 any months you are enrolled into coverage.

If you need this information in a language other than English or you need assistance reading this notice, we can help you. Call 1-855-355-5777 (TTY - English: 1-800-662-1220) (TTY - Spanish: 1-877-662-4886).

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 need this information in a language other than English or you need assistance reading this notice, we can help you. Call 1-855-355-5777 (TTY - English: 1-800-662-1220) (TTY – Spanish: 1-877-662-4886).

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

NYSOH's verbal determination that you do not qualify to select a health plan outside of the open enrollment period is incorrect, you should have been eligible for a special enrollment period as of the date of your February 5, 2018 application.

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 February 5, 2018, 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 any 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.

العربية (Arabic)

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

বাংলা (Bengali)

If you need this information in a language other than English or you need assistance reading this notice, we can help you. Call 1-855-355-5777 (TTY - English: 1-800-662-1220) (TTY – Spanish: 1-877-662-4886).

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 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 महत्वपूर्ण 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. ye bɛtumi ama wo obi a okyerɛ kasa a woka no ase ama wo kwa a wontua hwee.

(Urdu) اردو

یہ ایک اہم دستاویز ہے۔ اگر آپ کو اسے سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم 1-855-355-5777 پر کال کریں۔ ہم آپ کو آپ کی مادری زبان میں ایک مفت مترجم 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)

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

If you need this information in a language other than English or you need assistance reading this notice, we can help you. Call 1-855-355-5777 (TTY - English: 1-800-662-1220) (TTY - Spanish: 1-877-662-4886).

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