



Frederick P. Cerise, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

NEWS RELEASE

July 7, 2006

Contact: Media and Communications; 225-342-1532

Many Seniors and People with Disabilities Exempt from Medicaid Proof of Citizenship Requirements

Baton Rouge --- Officials with the Department of Health and Hospitals today announced new guidelines for those who must provide proof of citizenship when applying for Medicaid. This follows the announcement yesterday by the White House of certain exemptions to the regulation, which took effect July 1.

Medicaid enrollees and applicants who established their citizenship when they applied for Medicare or Supplemental Security Income would be exempt from the new documentation requirement. This applies to both current and former recipients of Medicare or Supplemental Security Income.

DHH Medicaid staff acted immediately to incorporate the additional flexibility and options into the program by updating its computer system, revising flyers and training eligibility workers on the new guidelines.

“We believe this is a good change,” said DHH Secretary Dr. Fred Cerise. “Anyone who receives Medicare or SSI has already proved citizenship. We have been extremely concerned about the impact the new law would have had on persons in nursing homes if the requirements had not been relaxed.”

Medicaid eligibility workers will also be able to work with other state agencies, such as the Department of Social Services, to verify identity through food stamp and other records.

“We have already made system changes and communicated the change to all of the Medicaid eligibility offices throughout the state,” said Medicaid Deputy Director Ruth Kennedy. “As always, anyone who has questions about proof of citizenship requirements should call or visit their local Medicaid office.”

For more information on the Louisiana Medicaid Program, including a list of local offices across the state, visit our Web site at www.medicaid.dhh.louisiana.gov. Persons with questions about the program can contact their local office or our toll-free General Medicaid Hotline at 1-888-342-6207.

-end-