



PROVIDER ALERT

September 7, 2010

Uninsured Eligibility Span for Purchase of Care (POC) Consumers

Effective September 15, 2010

The uninsured eligibility span for consumers receiving services through “Purchase of Care” will change from six months to three months, effective September 15, 2010.

“Purchase of Care” may be authorized if an emergency department is unable to admit a consumer in need of psychiatric admission to the hospital’s inpatient psychiatric service or is unable to obtain admission to another facility.

As a reminder the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is enforcing EMTALA in Maryland.

By federal law and regulation, if a patient requires a transfer, receiving hospitals cannot refuse to accept that patient on the basis of insurance status, authorization, other ability to pay or county of origin. This is true regardless of whether the receiving hospital participates in the Maryland Waiver program and regardless of whether the receiving hospital itself has an emergency department.

Patients generally will benefit from being admitted to a facility geographically proximate to their source of social support and likely follow up care and this should be considered by the transferring facility when attempting to find a receiving facility. But this factor cannot be used as a reason for a receiving facility to refuse a transfer.