

EXPLANATION OF THE EXCESS INCOME PROGRAM

The following is an explanation of how you may become eligible for Medical Assistance and receive help with your medical bills even though you may be over the limit. Please contact your social services worker if you need help understanding this letter.

If you have applied for Medical Assistance, our written notice to you will tell you if you have income over the Medical Assistance income level and the amount by which your income is over. This amount is also called excess income. If your net income is over (in excess of) the Medical Assistance level for your family size for a period in which you want help with your medical bills, you may receive Medical Assistance coverage only if either A or B is met:

A) Outpatient Care and Service (One-Month Eligibility)

You can become eligible for Medical Assistance for outpatient care and services if in any month you have medical bills that are equal to or more than the amount of your excess income.

This is possible under the Excess Income Program which provides outpatient coverage on a month-to-month basis for people who become eligible by bringing us their paid or unpaid medical bills which add up to at least the amount of their monthly excess income. You must present these medical bills to the agency when they add up to at least the amount of your excess income.

When you incur (owe) or have paid the amount of your monthly excess income and have submitted these bills and/or receipts to the agency, you may receive Medical Assistance coverage for all other eligible outpatient services for that month.

You can also become eligible for Medical Assistance coverage of long-term care services such as adult day health care, personal care services, and the Assisted Living Program. In order to be determined eligible for such services, you must supply proof of your current resources.

B) Outpatient and Inpatient/Hospital Care and Services (Six-Month Eligibility)

You can become eligible for Medical Assistance for all appropriate medical care and services (inpatient and outpatient) if you become hospitalized and/or are seeking help with your inpatient hospital bills, and if you incur (owe) or have paid an amount of medical bills equal to your monthly excess income for six months. Once you have medical bills (paid or unpaid), including any other medical bills besides your hospital bill that equal this six months' figure and present them to the agency, you will then receive Medical Assistance coverage each month for these six months for all other covered medical expenses (whether in-hospital or not).

You can also become eligible for Medical Assistance coverage of long-term care services such as adult day health care, personal care services, and the Assisted Living Program. In order to be determined eligible for such services, you must supply proof of your current resources.

C) Medicare, Private Insurance and Use of Bill

If a bill or service is covered in full by Medicare or private insurance, it cannot count as a medical expense to meet your monthly excess. If only part of a bill is covered by Medicare or private insurance, then that portion which remains (not covered by Medicare or private insurance) can count toward reducing or eliminating your monthly excess.

Bills for your care, your spouse's care or the care of your children who are under the age of 21 may be counted toward your monthly excess within the following guidelines. Medical bills of a child living with you will be considered. Medical bills of a child who is not part of your household may also be considered as long as you are providing medical support for the child. Bills for your parent's care, if you are under 21 and live with your parents, may also be counted toward meeting your monthly excess. Medical bills from prior months may be counted toward meeting your monthly excess. Once medical bills, whether old or current, are credited toward meeting your monthly excess, they cannot be counted again.

After you have enrolled in the Excess Income Program, you must arrange to either bring in or mail in your bills and receipts each month once you have accumulated medical expenses equal to or greater than your excess income.

We suggest that you make any necessary doctors appointments or fill prescriptions in the early part of each month so that, after you have met your excess amount, you can have the benefit of a Medical Assistance card to use for the payment of other medical expenses for that month. Medical Assistance may also be available for unpaid and certain paid bills for services and supplies received in the three calendar months prior to the month you applied.

D) Payment of Medical Bills

It is important to check to see if your doctor or other medical person accepts Medical Assistance payments. Medical Assistance will only **pay** bills from a doctor, druggist or other provider who accepts payments under New York's Medical Assistance Program. However, even if the doctor or other medical person does not accept Medical Assistance payments, you may still use bills from that person, whether paid or unpaid, to meet your excess income amount to qualify under the **Excess Income Program** (see below).

E) Allowable Medical Expenses

You should note that when meeting your excess amount, you could use doctor bills as well as medical expenses such as:

- Transportation expenses to obtain necessary medical services (in most cases).
- Medical expenses or payment made to therapists, nurses, personal care attendants and home health aides (as required by a physician).
- Prescription drug bills.
- Payments made toward surgical supplies, medical equipment, prosthetic devices, hearing aids and eyeglasses (as ordered by a doctor).

You can also use medical expenses that are not covered by the Medical Assistance Program such as:

- Chiropractor's services (and other non-covered services).
- Co-payments you are charged when you receive certain Medical Assistance services.
- Services from non-participating providers (people who provide medical services but do not accept Medical Assistance payments).
- Some over-the-counter drugs and medical supplies such as bandages and dressings may be applied toward reduction of your excess income if they have been ordered by a doctor or are medically necessary. Bills for cosmetics and other non-medical items are not acceptable.

Certain of these bills can be counted only if required by a physician. Some of these services and supplies can also be paid for with your Medical Assistance card, but may have some restrictions.

F) Excess Income Amount

You may also pay your excess income amount directly to the social services agency to obtain Medical Assistance coverage. Ask your Medical Assistance examiner for information.

Should there be a change in your circumstances (financial, household size, etc.), your eligibility in the Excess Income Program could be affected. All changes must be reported to your local social services office.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY EXAMINER FOR DETAILS