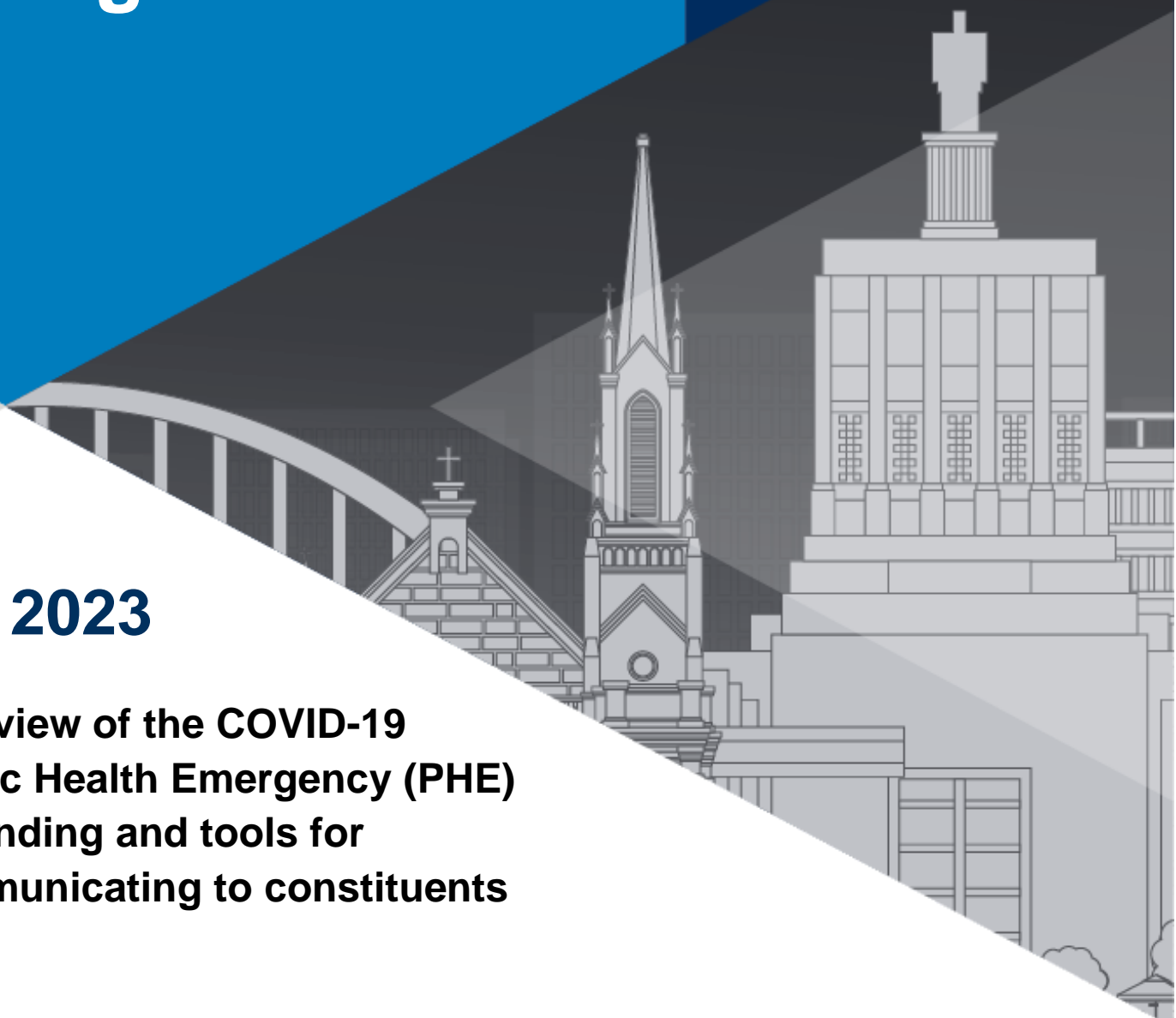


COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Unwinding Toolkit for Legislators

FEB 2023

**Overview of the COVID-19
Public Health Emergency (PHE)
unwinding and tools for
communicating to constituents**



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This toolkit provides legislators with background information and resources to prepare people in Oregon for potential changes in their health coverage and other benefits delivered through the ONE Eligibility system when the federal COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) ends.

Government Relations Contacts

ODHS: Max Bernstein
Email: Max.Bernstein@dhsosha.state.or.us
Phone: 503-731-9690

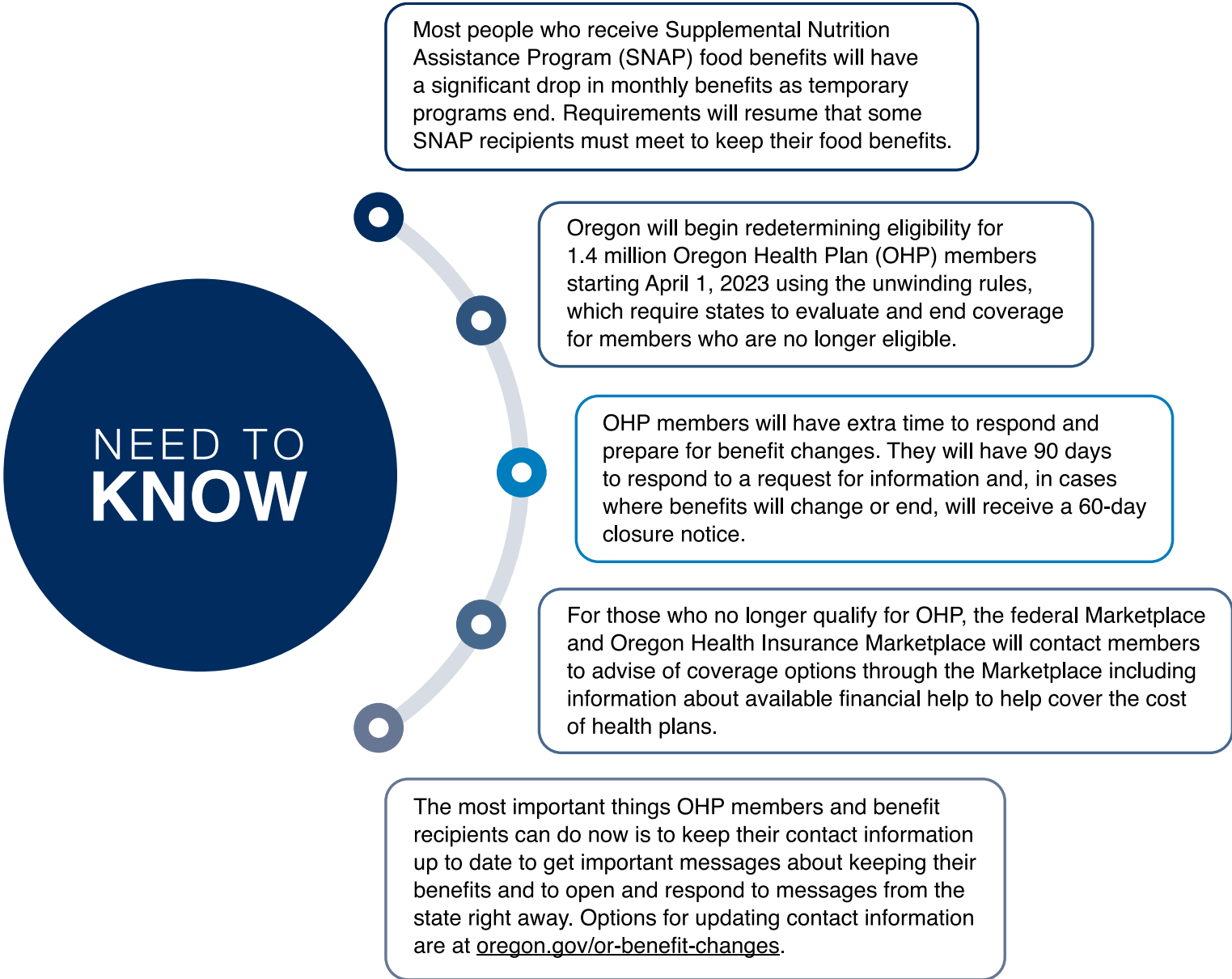
OHA: Philip Schmidt
Email: philip.schmidt@dhsosha.state.or.us
Phone: 503-383-6079

For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the COVID-19 Communications Unit at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us.

What you need to know

During the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), the federal government extended health coverage, services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults, and provided extra food benefits, along with other regulatory flexibilities. The flexibilities and temporary programs will end as the federal COVID-19 PHE phases out.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) are working together to prepare for the unwinding of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Together the agencies provide benefits and services to 1 in 3 people in Oregon through the ONE eligibility system. The joint agency effort focuses on the medical, services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults, and food benefits issued through the ONE eligibility system.



Most people who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits will have a significant drop in monthly benefits as temporary programs end. Requirements will resume that some SNAP recipients must meet to keep their food benefits.

Oregon will begin redetermining eligibility for 1.4 million Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members starting April 1, 2023 using the unwinding rules, which require states to evaluate and end coverage for members who are no longer eligible.

OHP members will have extra time to respond and prepare for benefit changes. They will have 90 days to respond to a request for information and, in cases where benefits will change or end, will receive a 60-day closure notice.

For those who no longer qualify for OHP, the federal Marketplace and Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace will contact members to advise of coverage options through the Marketplace including information about available financial help to help cover the cost of health plans.

The most important things OHP members and benefit recipients can do now is to keep their contact information up to date to get important messages about keeping their benefits and to open and respond to messages from the state right away. Options for updating contact information are at oregon.gov/or-benefit-changes.

The Goal: Preserve benefits

1

Ensure **all people and families eligible for benefits offered through the ONE system receive and continue to receive services in a timely manner** without interruption

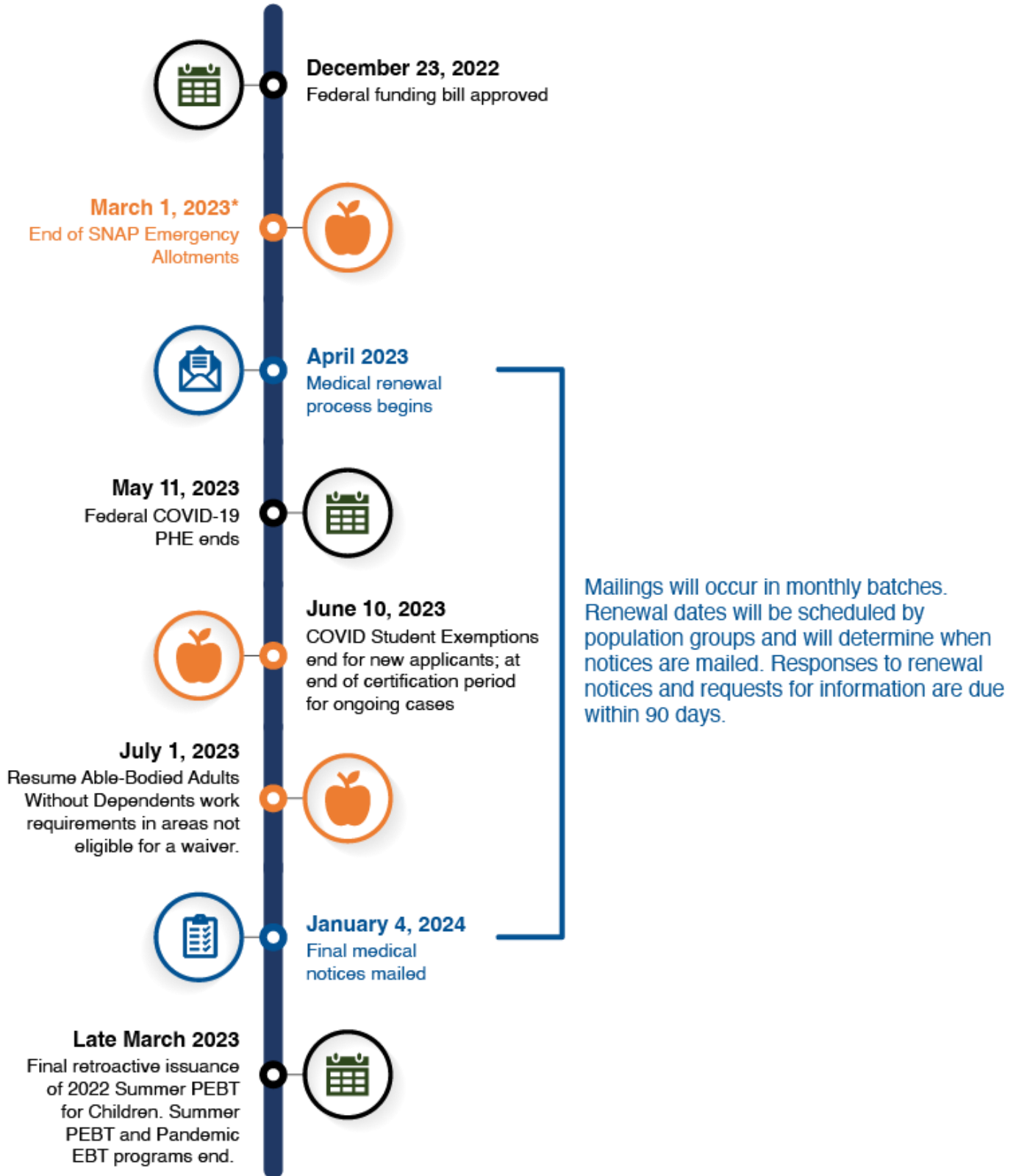
2

Give those **no longer eligible for benefits clear direction and coordination** of additional resources

3

Give those who assist people receiving benefits **clear information about how they can help**

When Oregonians will see changes in their benefits



Overview of what is changing

People receiving Oregon Health Plan, services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults, and food benefits through the ONE Eligibility system will see changes in their benefits at different times as the federal COVID-19 PHE phases out.

FEBRUARY 2023

Last month eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households will receive extra food benefits known as Emergency Allotments (EA).

MARCH 2023

End of SNAP EA. First month since April 2020 that most people receiving SNAP in Oregon will only receive their regular SNAP food benefits between the 1st and 9th of each month.

Oregon will issue retroactive Summer PEBT benefits for 2022 in mid-March 2023. Summer PEBT and Pandemic EBT have been issued periodically during the PHE for children whose access to adequate and quality food may have been impacted by COVID-19. These temporary programs are ending.

APRIL 2023

Oregon Health Plan benefit renewals begin and continue into mid-2024.

OHP members will receive a renewal notice starting in April 2023 through January 2024 notifying them of their eligibility status. OHP members will have 90 days to respond to a request for information. In cases where benefits will change or end, they will receive a 60-day closure notice.

For those who no longer qualify for OHP, the federal Marketplace and Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace will contact them to advise of coverage options through the Marketplace including information about available financial help to help cover the cost of health plans end enrollment periods.

Previous flexibilities that allowed the state to accept self-attestation will change effective April 1, 2023. This will increase verification requirements for members when applying for and renewing OHP.

MAY 2023

The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency expires.

JUNE 2023

SNAP temporary exemptions for students of higher education begin phasing out. The exemptions allowed more students to be eligible for monthly food benefits.

JULY 2023

Work requirements resume for SNAP recipients who meet the criteria for Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) status. Some areas of Oregon with higher unemployment rates than the national rate will be exempt from restarting the work requirements. Others will make use of limited number of discretionary exemptions. The following areas will be resuming the work requirements: Clackamas, Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, Linn, Marion, Multnomah and Washington.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should people receiving OHP or other medical benefits expect when the continuous eligibility requirements end?

- People receiving OHP and other medical benefits, including long-term services and supports and help paying Medicare costs, will not automatically lose their benefits.
- Oregon will start reviewing eligibility of all people receiving OHP other medical benefits. Oregon is allowed 14 months to do this. There are four scenarios that people may experience:
 - Most people will continue to qualify for their current benefits
 - Some people may transition to a different medical program with reduced benefits.
 - Some may lose Medicaid payments for their long-term services and supports they receive through ODHS. In some cases, especially for long-term services and supports, no equivalent benefit will be available.
 - For those who no longer qualify for OHP benefits, information will be sent from the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace advising of health plan and financial assistance options available.

What should people receiving OHP or other medical benefits expect during the eligibility review period?

- People receiving OHP or other benefits will receive letters in the mail from the state. It's important that people keep their mailing address, phone number and email address current so they can get these letters. You can see options for updating contact information at Oregon.gov/OR-benefit-changes.
- All mail from the state contains important information about benefits. The letters will tell people the next steps, if any, that they will need to take to keep their medical benefits.
- People receiving benefits can get help to follow the instructions on the letters by calling 800-699-9075 (TTY 711) or visiting OregonHealthCare.gov/GetHelp to get help in person through a trusted community partner. All relay calls are accepted.
- Even if people no longer qualify for OHP or other benefits from the state, there are other options. It's important they respond to letters from the state so they can get help finding coverage they qualify for.

What should people receiving SNAP food benefits expect as the PHE phases out?

- During the COVID-19 PHE, SNAP recipients have received extra food benefits. The extra food benefits are from temporary pandemic programs. These include the SNAP Emergency Allotments people receive every month and P-EBT or Summer P-EBT food benefits that some families with children received occasionally during the pandemic.

- SNAP Emergency Allotments end in February 2023. SNAP recipients were sent a letter informing them of this change.
- Starting March 1, 2023, people will continue to receive their regular SNAP benefits between the 1st and 9th day of every month. The extra food benefits from temporary pandemic programs will end.
- Oregon will issue retroactive Summer P-EBT benefits for 2022 in mid-March 2023. Pandemic EBT and Summer EBT for Children have been issued periodically during the PHE for children whose access to adequate and quality food may have been impacted by COVID-19. These temporary programs will end.
- SNAP temporary exemptions for students of higher education begin phasing out in June 2023. The exemptions allowed more students to be eligible for monthly food benefits.
- In July 2023, work requirements resume for SNAP recipients who meet the criteria for Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) status. Some areas of Oregon with higher unemployment rates than the national rate will be exempt from restarting the work requirements. Others will make use of limited number of discretionary exemptions. The following areas will be resuming the work requirements: Clackamas, Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, Linn, Marion, Multnomah and Washington.

How should people receiving medical, services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults, or food benefits prepare?

- Medicaid pays the long-term services and supports costs for eligible individuals who have low incomes. There are several programs that may provide some assistance but will not replace these benefits. Services and supports provided for people with disabilities and older adults are provided based on the individual's need and choice, which means support can be provided in a person's home or in a care setting.
 - Anyone who no longer meets financial eligibility for services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults could lose coverage as well as the payment for other supports they receive. The other supports may include their housing if they are living in a licensed care setting. They will receive a separate notice if any of these services are ending. This notice will include next steps and resources.
 - There is no equivalent benefit, state Basic Health Program, or other payer source available for services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults.
 - People who remain financially eligible for services and supports will keep their medical coverage as long as they are eligible based on their assessed need for services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults.

How should people who turned 65 during the pandemic prepare?

- People who turned 65 during the pandemic may need to transition from OHP to Medicare.
- People who turned 65 during the pandemic and need to transition will see changes in coverage and out-of-pocket costs.
- They may need to pay a penalty if they did not enroll in Medicare when first eligible, by turning 65, and may have a waiting period for coverage. Ensuring that there is no interruption in coverage will protect people from penalties as a result of this gap. Please encourage people to enroll as soon as they are eligible.

Resources



Website

Visit www.oregon.gov/covidphe for more information, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), the [sign up for the partner newsletter](#), and other resources for partners and people receiving benefits.



Options for updating contact information

There are many ways to update contact information so the state can reach people with important information about their benefits. Options are available at oregon.gov/or-benefit-changes.



Partner Toolkits

Toolkits for community partners in multiple languages are available at www.oregon.gov/covid-phe-partners. The toolkits include drop-in articles for use online or in print, social media, flyers and more.

Monthly webinars for community partners

ODHS and OHA host a monthly webinar series about how the two agencies are working together to prepare for these upcoming changes with the goal of preserving benefits for individuals and families.

Webinars are held in both English and Spanish, from 10 to 11 a.m., Pacific Time. Registration links and promotional flyers are posted to www.oregon.gov/covid-phe-partners. Following the webinar, meeting materials and a recording are posted to the same webpage.

American Sign Language and live closed captioning are provided. Other accommodations are provided on request.

English	March 14	April 11	May 9
Spanish	March 23	April 20	May 18



Keep Covered Newsletter

A newsletter for partners and providers to receive updates. Please view and share the [first edition of Keep Covered](#). Anyone can subscribe for future editions at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDHS/signup/35855>.



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