

# DHS software system presents challenges in Medicaid disenrollment process

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At the end of July, Arkansas will have to report to the federal government data on how many Medicaid recipients lost coverage. At the end of last year, Congress passed a bill that ordered states to update their Medicaid rolls the disenroll recipients who were only eligible for coverage under the COVID-era policies.

During a Zoom conference call on Tuesday, the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families spoke with Trevor Townsend, who handles Medicaid benefits for the Center for Arkansas Legal Services, about the problems he is seeing while handling cases related to the state's Medicaid disenrollment process.

Townsend said he has seen an increase in Medicaid claims in the past few months because of the disenrollment process. Arkansas, like every other state, is required by the federal government to disenroll Medicaid recipients who were only eligible under the COVID-era policies.

Townsend said one of the issues with the disenrollment process has been how the

recipients.

“They [DHS] combined the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with Medicaid notices. Some folks are getting decisions on their SNAP cases and they are also getting language in their Medicaid cases all in the same and it can be really confusing,” he said.

According to data from the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, about 142,000 Medicaid recipients have lost their Medicaid coverage due to failure to return paperwork. In an interview earlier this month with KARK Channel 4’s Capitol View, Janet Mann, state Medicaid director, said there is a process in place for those who failed to submit paperwork to get their coverage back.

Townsend said another problem with notices has been recipients are not receiving notices and are learning about them when they are at the doctor’s office or at a pharmacy. He said part of the reason for this problem has to do with the new software system DHS implemented in 2019. Townsend said he sent a Freedom of Information request to DHS to see how many tickets/issues the department reported to the software administrator.

“In two and half months time, at least 4,192 tickets according to their response. It’s so voluminous that I had to narrow the requests. There’s just no way I could review all the records,” he said.

According to data from the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, there have been about 219,000 who have lost their Medicaid coverage since April.

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