



Managed Care Choice Counseling Overview

Iowa Medicaid Member Services will provide choice counseling for Medicaid members enrolled in the IA Health Link managed care program.

Federal Definitions (42 CFR §438.810 (a)):

Choice Counseling: Means activities such as answering questions and providing information (in an unbiased manner) on available managed care organization (MCO), PIHP (pre-paid inpatient health plan), pre-paid ambulatory health plan (PAHP), or primary care case management (PCCM) delivery system options, and advising on what factors to consider when choosing among them and in selecting a primary care provider.

NPRM Definition of Choice Counseling (42 CFR §438.2) Choice Counseling: Means the provision of information and services designed to assist beneficiaries in making enrollment decisions; it includes answering questions and identifying factors to consider when choosing among managed care health plans and primary care providers. Choice counseling does not include making recommendations for or against enrollment into a specific MCO, PIHP, or PAHP.

Member Services Choice Counseling Activities

1. Telephonic Assistance
 - a. Medicaid members may call Iowa Medicaid Member Services to receive choice counseling from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.
 - b. MCO selections can be made without speaking to a live customer service representative by using the telephonic selection option 24/7.
2. Written Communications
 - a. Member may send questions via email: IMEMemberServices@dhs.state.ia.us.
 - b. Educational materials, including enrollment packets (letters, handbook, support materials) will be distributed by Member Services.
3. In-Person Assistance
 - a. Enrollment Service Representatives will host meetings throughout the state to educate members and offer choice counseling assistance.

Choice Counseling Approach: Iowa Medicaid Member Services assists members by providing information about the MCOs and proposes items for members to consider when making the decision. It's important to note that choice counseling does not allow for Iowa Medicaid Member Services to make any kind of recommendation on which MCO should be selected.

Common Questions to Discuss with Members

1. Are your providers part of the MCO network/available in your community?
2. Are your pharmacies part of the MCO network/available in your community?
3. Are your health care specialists part of the MCO network/available in your community?
4. Does the MCO have any value-added services or health programs that are beneficial?
5. Does the MCO have member support available to fit your needs (call center hours, languages, etc.)?