

Affected Programs: BadgerCare Plus, Medicaid, Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program, Wisconsin Well Woman Program

To: All Providers, HMOs and Other Managed Care Programs

ForwardHealth Holiday and Furlough Day Schedule

ForwardHealth will be closed for business in recognition of certain holidays and in accordance with state furlough days occurring in calendar year 2009 and 2010, which will affect call center and other resources availability as well as payment review and approval. The holiday and furlough day schedule is provided in this *ForwardHealth Update*.

ForwardHealth Holiday Schedule and Furlough Days

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Furlough Days

The recently enacted state budget for state fiscal years 2010 and 2011 requires state agencies to reduce operating expenditures. As a result, agencies have been directed to develop plans requiring all state employees to take the equivalent of eight days of leave without pay, called furlough days, in each of the next two fiscal years. The recently approved Department of Health Services (DHS) furlough plan requires DHS offices to be closed on the days included in the Attachment of this *ForwardHealth Update*. Department of Health Services contractors, such as EDS, fiscal agent for ForwardHealth, will be part of the furlough program at DHS.

Refer to the Attachment for the holiday and furlough day schedule for 2009 and early 2010.

Claim Submission and Payment Review and Approval Schedule

Claims submitted to ForwardHealth and processed by ForwardHealth interChange go through a claims processing cycle, a financial cycle, and then are reviewed and approved for payment. ForwardHealth interChange runs a claims processing cycle approximately every 20 minutes, 24 hours per day, seven days a week. A financial cycle is run once a week for each financial payer. Claims that have completed the claims processing cycle by 6:00 p.m. on the day that the weekly financial cycle will be run will be included in that financial cycle. Once each financial cycle is complete, the results are reviewed and approved by state staff before payments are released to providers.

Providers who want certain claims to appear in their remittance information by a particular date are encouraged to submit the claims as early as possible prior to the day that the financial cycle is run. The claim may complete the claims processing cycle in time to be included in the financial cycle.

Claim Submission Deadlines

ForwardHealth will accept electronic claims at any time, including all holidays and furlough days. To be included in the financial cycle, claims must have completed the claims processing cycle by 6:00 p.m. on the following

days regardless of the submission method (paper or electronic):

- Mondays for Wisconsin Well Women Program (WWWP).
- Tuesdays for Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program (WCDP).
- Fridays for Wisconsin Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus, and SeniorCare.

Providers who use a vendor or clearinghouse for electronic claims submission purposes should contact them for their holiday schedule.

Payment Review and Approval

The claims processing cycles and the financial cycles will not be affected by holidays or furlough days. However, payment review and approval by state staff will be affected.

Furlough or Holiday Occurs on a Monday

If a furlough day or holiday occurs on a Monday, payments to Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus, and SeniorCare providers will be delayed one day:

- The payment date will be Tuesday (rather than Monday).
- Paper checks and Remittance Advices (RAs) will be mailed no later than Wednesday (rather than no later than Tuesday).
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) payments will occur on Friday (rather than Thursday).

Additionally, due to furlough policy, state staff may not be available for payment review and approval for the subsequent financial cycle following a Monday furlough day; therefore, payments *may* be delayed the following week as well.

For example, Monday, October 12, 2009, is a furlough day. The payment date for the Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus financial cycle will be Tuesday, October 13, 2009. The paper checks and RAs will be mailed no later than Wednesday, October 14, 2009, and the EFT payment

will occur on Friday, October 16, 2009. Due to state staff availability, the payment review and approval of the Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus financial cycle that runs on Friday, October 16, 2009, may be delayed, which may result in payments being delayed the week of October 19, 2009.

Furlough Day Occurs on a Friday

If a furlough day occurs on a Friday, there will be no impact on the financial cycle, but payment review and approval will take place later than usual, which *may* result in delays for paper checks and RAs. Electronic Funds Transfer payments will occur on Thursday as usual.

For example, Friday, November 27, 2009, is a furlough day. The financial cycle will run as scheduled, but payment review and approval will take place later than usual, which *may* delay mailing of the paper checks and RAs by one day.

Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program, Wisconsin Well Woman Program, and HMOs and Other Managed Care Programs

Payment review and approval for WCDP, the WWWP, and HMOs and other managed care programs will not be affected by holidays or furlough days for the dates listed in the Attachment.

ForwardHealth Portal

The ForwardHealth Portal is available Monday through Sunday, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services available through the Portal are prior authorization submission, claim submission, and enrollment verification. The Portal can be accessed at www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/.

Call Center Availability

Telephone lines, call centers, and other resources will not be available on the holidays and furlough days listed

in the Attachment. Call centers and other resources include the following:

- Electronic Data Interchange Helpdesk.
- ForwardHealth Portal Helpdesk.
- Managed Care Ombudsman Program.
- Member Services.
- Provider Services.
- Professional Relations Representatives.
- SeniorCare Member Services.
- Drug Authorization and Policy Override Center.

The *ForwardHealth Update* is the first source of program policy and billing information for providers.

Wisconsin Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus, SeniorCare, and Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program are administered by the Division of Health Care Access and Accountability, Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). The Wisconsin Well Woman Program is administered by the Division of Public Health, Wisconsin DHS.

For questions, call Provider Services at (800) 947-9627 or visit our Web site at www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/.

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ATTACHMENT

ForwardHealth Holiday and Furlough Day Schedules

| ForwardHealth Holiday Schedule and Furlough Days for 2009 and 2010 | | |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Date Closed for Business | Day of the Week | Holiday Observed or Furlough Day |
| October 12, 2009 | Monday | Furlough Day |
| November 26, 2009 | Thursday | Thanksgiving |
| November 27, 2009 | Friday | Furlough Day |
| December 24, 2009 | Thursday | Christmas Eve |
| December 25, 2009 | Friday | Christmas Day |
| December 31, 2009 | Thursday | New Year's Eve |
| January 1, 2010 | Friday | New Year's Day |
| January 18, 2010 | Monday | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| February 15, 2010 | Monday | Furlough Day |
| May 28, 2010 | Friday | Furlough Day |
| May 31, 2010 | Monday | Memorial Day |