

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 29, 2013

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Lincoln, Lexington DHHS Customer Service Centers to handle Medicaid/CHIP cases only

Lincoln – Effective July 1, staff in the Department of Health and Human Services' Lincoln and Lexington customer service centers will report to the Medicaid and Long-Term Care Division, and begin the transition of those centers to determine clients' eligibility for and work with Medicaid recipients and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), it was announced today (3/29) by CEO Kerry Winterer.

These two customer service centers, as well as those in Fremont and Scottsbluff, currently work with all economic assistance programs administered by DHHS including Medicaid and CHIP programs. The four centers are currently managed by the agency's Division of Children and Family Services.

With the change, the Fremont and Scottsbluff centers will transition to solely handle economic assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Aid to Dependent Children; Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled; energy assistance; and child care subsidy and will remain with CFS.

Local offices in other communities will continue to provide services to clients.

The change is in response to Affordable Care Act requirements and will bring all responsibilities for Medicaid and CHIP together within the MLTC division. In addition, staff in all four centers will concentrate on specific program areas and develop more expertise in those areas.

"These programs are complex," Winterer said. "Once training is complete, we believe these separate areas of focus will help us to be more responsive to client needs."

DHHS is developing an operational plan to implement the changes and is examining options to handle client inquiries between the two types of services, he said. Several committees are working on the transition to minimize the impact on clients, programs, policies, systems and staff.

The ACCESSNebraska document imaging center in Lincoln will work with Medicaid and become part of MLTC, and the Omaha imaging center will remain with the economic assistance programs in CFS.

The customer service centers employ 100 workers in Lincoln, 50 in Lexington, 150 in Fremont and 100 in Scottsbluff. About 20 employees work in each of the document imaging centers in Omaha and Lincoln. There will be no change in employee job titles, salaries, work location and no reduction in staff.

Open enrollment for qualified health benefit plans under the Affordable Care Act health exchange, including Medicaid and CHIP, begins Oct. 1, he said.

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