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Lower costs allow GAMC program to continue through end of March

Governor Tim Pawlenty and Minnesota Human Services Commissioner Cal Ludeman today announced that state funding is available for the General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) program until April 1 and eligible enrollees can continue on the program through March 31. GAMC program funding had been expected to end on March 1.

“This extra month of GAMC coverage is possible because program costs and new enrollment were lower than projected,” Governor Pawlenty said. “The extension means that people can remain on GAMC through March and then will automatically be transitioned to MinnesotaCare.”

Except that the change will take place a month later, Commissioner Ludeman said the transition process for approximately 28,000 enrollees now on GAMC will be the same as that announced in November. No action will be required on the part of these enrollees, who will receive a notice from the Department of Human Services about the transition. New applicants otherwise eligible for GAMC can apply for MinnesotaCare at their local county office.

“Transitioning people on GAMC to MinnesotaCare maintains health care coverage for enrollees,” said Commissioner Ludeman. “We continue to work with counties, providers, community agencies and faith-based organizations to help enrollees through the transition.” DHS has held a number of briefings and community meetings to share information about the process. Information is also available at www.dhs.state.mn.us/gamc.

Counties will pay MinnesotaCare premiums for the newly transferred enrollees for up to six months, depending on the time remaining in the GAMC enrollee’s eligibility period. At the end of the eligibility period, enrollees will need to renew their eligibility and pay for their premiums, which average \$5 a month.

GAMC, a state-funded program, covers adults without dependent children with incomes up to 75 percent of the poverty level (\$677 a month for one person). Nearly all of these adults are also eligible for MinnesotaCare, which covers adults without children with incomes up to 250 percent of poverty (\$2,257 a month for one person). MinnesotaCare coverage is funded through the state Health Care Access Fund and enrollee premiums.