

# **TIPS FOR APPLYING FOR INSTITUTIONAL (Nursing Home) MEDICAID**

When a loved one or family friend needs nursing home care or care in an institution, it can be very stressful. There are many worries, especially about how to pay for this care. The Alabama Medicaid Agency works with families to help pay for this care.

Due to many federal and state laws and regulations, the process of applying for this type of Medicaid requires patience and understanding on both sides.

**There are things you can do to make the process easier for you and the worker who will be working on your application.**

**1) Check to see if your loved one qualifies for any benefits from another source,** such as benefits provided through the VA. Having to check on this later may hold up your application.

**2) Be aware that the worker is required by federal law to “look back” 60 months** before the application date to see how the applicant’s income or resources were spent. This date starts the month before the month you apply.

**3) Try to make your application as complete as possible when you turn it in!** This means finding all the documents that will be needed and putting it together in a box or folder. Many applications are held up because of missing information or documents. This information along with other information is used to determine if an individual is eligible for Medicaid. Please send copies of all items that apply to you or your spouse. Make copies of anything you need to keep.

Here are the types of documents Medicaid will need from the applicant/spouse:

**Bank statements or balances** may be requested for different time periods.

- For the first 12 months of the look-back period at initial application, each month;
- For the 13<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> months of the look-back period, quarterly;
- For the 25<sup>th</sup>- 60<sup>th</sup> months of the look-back period, mid and year-end, e.g. June and December

**Other documents from the past five years including, but not limited to:**

Annuities	Trusts	Property Deeds
Life Insurance policies	Bonds	Burial contracts/policies
Medicare Part D policies	Promissory Notes	Loans
Long-term care policies	Stocks	IRA’s/CD’s/Mutual funds
Tag receipts/titles	Social Security Card	Medicare Card
Power of Attorney	Conservatorship	Guardianship documents
Wills	Other documents as required	

## **Proof of income**

You will need to show the applicant's gross income (before anything is taken out) that is now used to purchase food, shelter other basic needs of life; Examples: Veterans Administration (VA), Social Security (SSA) benefits, Rental Income, Railroad Retirement, Pensions, Earned income/Wages, Civil Service, and Royalties, Timber Sales, etc., and Interest.

## **SPECIAL RULES**

### **COUPLES**

One of the biggest concerns families have is what happens to assets (such as a house) that the applicant and his or her spouse share. There are special rules for this situation that may allow some or all of the assets – including the home of the couple – to be protected, or set aside. In addition, some of the applicant's income may be allocated to the spouse who is living in the community.

During the application process, an assessment of the couple's resources will be completed.

### **LIENS**

Medicaid does not take a lien on a home when there is a spouse, child who is under 21, or a blind or disabled child lawfully living in the home, or when a sibling with equity interest in the home is lawfully living in the home and was there for at least one year immediately prior to the applicant being admitted to the nursing home.

There is no requirement for a lien when these criteria are met for any reason from any facility or organization in order to qualify for Medicaid. *IMPORTANT NOTE: Before liquidating any assets or assigning a lien to the nursing home, please contact a District Office or Customer Service Center for help.*

### **COVERAGE PERIOD**

Coverage may begin three months before the month the application was made, if medical services were received and all eligibility requirements are met. Submitting an application when an individual initially enters the nursing home is encouraged so Medicaid can possibly cover expenses not covered by Medicare or other a long-term care policy.

### **VETERANS**

Veterans and spouses are eligible to keep \$90 for their needs from their VA income.