General Providers

Overview of the New Plastic Medical Cards

Bulletin 888, posted May 27, 2008, announced that beginning on September 1, 2008, the Kansas Medical Assistance Program (KMAP) will no longer issue a monthly paper medical card but instead will issue each of its 275,000 beneficiaries a permanent plastic identification (ID) card equipped with magnetic swipe technology. This technology will allow providers to “swipe” the card through a card reader and instantly access a beneficiary’s eligibility information through the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS). The transition will benefit both providers and beneficiaries with greater convenience, accuracy and security. KMAP wants all providers to feel prepared and equipped for this change. This publication provides answers to some commonly asked questions regarding the new Kansas permanent plastic medical cards.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What information is on the plastic Kansas medical card?
A: The Kansas medical card is an ID card only.
   • The front of the card contains the beneficiary’s name, date of birth, and KMAP ID number.
   • The back of the card contains a magnetic stripe, as well as important information for both the beneficiary and the provider.
   • Possession of a Kansas medical card does not guarantee eligibility or payment for services. Providers are responsible for verifying the identity and eligibility of the cardholder.
   • A detailed overview of the benefits of the Kansas medical card can be found in Bulletin 888.

Q: Do I need to buy a card reader in order to process Medicaid claims starting in September 2008?
A: No. The magnetic stripe technology is the newest way to access the Kansas MMIS for eligibility information. This is a technology upgrade. None of the current eligibility verification methods will be eliminated. Providers are not required to purchase a card reader to verify beneficiary eligibility status and can continue to use existing verification processes at no cost.
Q: How will I know if a beneficiary is eligible?
A: Since eligibility information will not appear on the Kansas medical card, it will be necessary for providers to verify eligibility before providing services. Possession of a card does not guarantee Medicaid eligibility. Eligibility frequently changes. A beneficiary may be eligible for Medicaid one month but not the next. A beneficiary may present a card during a period of ineligibility. Type of eligibility and other important information, such as copayment levels, spenddown amounts, and managed care assignments, can change frequently. As with the paper card, it is always important to check a beneficiary’s eligibility at the time of service. There are still a variety of free eligibility verification resources for providers to use. A provider may check eligibility using the following methods:

- **Magnetic Swipe Technology**
  - The new card uses the same swipe technology used for credit cards.
  - This technology allows providers to use a card reader and a service provider to automatically access real-time beneficiary eligibility information through MMIS.

- **AVRS (Automated Voice Response System)**
  - This resource automatically provides the beneficiary’s eligibility over the telephone.
  - It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
  - The entire call takes less than one minute.

- **AVRS Faxback**
  - This resource sends a fax to the provider’s fax machine with the beneficiary’s eligibility listed.
  - The fax service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
  - The entire process takes about 30 seconds. The fax begins within seconds of ending the call.

- **Secure KMAP Web Site**
  - The secure KMAP Web site allows staff with authorization to conduct real-time eligibility verifications.
  - Staff simply enters the beneficiary’s ID and the date of service.
  - This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Customer Service**
  - Eligibility can be verified by calling KMAP Customer Service at 1-800-933-6593 and speaking with an agent.
  - This service is available between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Q: Does it matter which method of eligibility verification I use?
A: No. The results will be consistent for all methods available to verify eligibility. Verification methods, including AVRS, the secure KMAP Web site, and the swipe card device, use the standard HIPAA healthcare eligibility transaction and access the same data. The difference in the applications is simply different access points.

Q: How long does it take to verify a beneficiary’s eligibility if I use the swipe method?
A: Swiping the card will be the fastest method available. This process uses the same technology as credit card transactions. A provider can expect to receive eligibility information just as fast as swiping a credit card for payment.
Q: **How can providers get the equipment?**
A: Providers may want to check with their existing card reader vendor or business practice management software company. KHHP and EDS are researching vendors in the industry to gather company contact information for providers. While we cannot endorse a particular vendor, we plan to publish a list of companies who support electronic healthcare eligibility transactions through swipe devices and who have expressed an interest in working with KMAP providers. In the interim, providers may want to search the Internet using key terms such as “healthcare eligibility verification swipe device.”

Q: **How much does a card reader cost and is there a set-up fee?**
A: Many providers’ offices will be able to use their existing equipment and vendor.
- The provider will need to ensure their current equipment and vendor support the new service.
- Some providers may already have compatible hardware and only need to subscribe to a new vendor’s service.

Some providers may need to purchase equipment and obtain a vendor.
- Providers may need to purchase a card reader, available at a nominal price. If a provider chooses to purchase new equipment, he or she will need to pay a set-up fee to get started and then enter into a lease with a vendor.
- Providers will want to ensure the equipment purchased is compatible with their existing technology. Some providers may need to have changes made to phone lines or begin using Internet services.
- Vendors structure costs based on the volume of transactions or have a flat monthly charge. Each provider has different business processes, technology and transaction volumes. In order to estimate the costs your facility will incur, a provider may want to request information from multiple vendors.
- Several regional workshops have been scheduled that will allow providers to view demonstrations and receive information from various vendors. See the list of dates and locations below.

Q: **Will there be transaction fees associated with the new swipe cards?**
A: There is a good chance that the software companies may charge a per swipe fee. We found a wide range of packages for transactions, starting at $24.95 for 50 searches a month. (Please see answer above for additional information regarding fees.)

Q: **What information is returned if we swipe the card?**
A: We will provide all eligibility-related data elements that are currently returned with our AVRS or KMAP Web site.
- It will be the vendors’ responsibility to ensure they are providing all the related data elements on the printouts.
- For more technical information regarding data that can be returned, please access our EDI Companion Guides on the KMAP Web site.
Q: When will providers and beneficiaries get to view the design of the new card?
A: The design selected is shown below.

![Medical Card Design](image)

Q: Will Medicaid benefits change as a result of the new cards being implemented?
A: No. Kansas Medicaid is simply changing their medical cards from a monthly paper card to a permanent plastic card.

Q: Have other state Medicaid programs introduced medical cards with advance ID card technology?
A: Yes. Many other state Medicaid programs already use magnetically encoded cards for their beneficiaries. Kansas has been given the opportunity to glean knowledge and make improvements based on their experiences. While there are many different systems, a few key elements appear to be consistent from state to state.

- All states issue one card per eligible person, rather than one card per household or one card per case. This allows beneficiaries within a household to obtain services in different locations at the same time. It also eliminates the need to replace cards when the composition of a household changes.
- Other states use their Medicaid ID cards only for Medicaid purposes. Cards do not contain information on any other programs. This approach avoids the complexities of coordinating with other programs and across agencies.
- All states provide alternate means of access to the electronic verification system.
- Kansas’ medical card is distinctive because Kansas is the first state to conform card information to national standards for advanced ID cards as endorsed by the Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI). With the provision of WEDI national standards, it is likely that other payers will convert their cards to these standards in the near future.

Q: Will other insurance plans convert to swipeable cards?
A: Yes. Standardized health insurance cards equipped with advanced ID card technology are not confined to Medicaid. Most of America’s health plans have indicated plans to convert their member cards to advanced ID card technology in the near future. United Health Care, for example, is well underway in their conversion process. They participated with the Kansas stakeholder group in a study of several Kansas medical offices using the new technology. Eventually the insurance companies of the State Employee Health Plan will be required to adhere to the national standards and use advanced ID card technology. Private employers, equally concerned about issues of health care quality and cost, are urging their plans to convert to this technology.
Q: What type of education will providers receive?
A: Regional workshops will be held to provide information concerning the change to plastic cards and the available methods for Medicaid eligibility verification.

- Several eligibility verification vendors will provide information and conduct demonstrations of their Medicaid eligibility verification services. Since KMAP does not provide equipment or software to conduct swipe card transactions, detailed training regarding the vendors’ services will need to be provided by the vendors.
- KMAP will ensure providers are fully aware of related transaction specifics for vendors as well as continue to provide training on the eligibility verification methods currently available to providers at no cost.
- Bulletin 8109 provides complete information on the upcoming workshops. Workshops are scheduled for the following locations throughout the state.
  - Wichita – July 21
  - Topeka – July 23
  - Overland Park – July 24
  - Hays – July 29

Q: Will beneficiaries be able to verify if they are eligible?
A: Yes. In conjunction with this project, we are also implementing two additional pieces of technology to ensure beneficiaries have convenient access to information.

- This fall, we will implement a secure beneficiary Web portal similar to our secure provider Web site. We have conducted an internal study to gauge beneficiaries’ computer access and have seen positive results. This new site will allow beneficiaries to access their personal KMAP data and conduct various transactions, such as verifying their eligibility or requesting replacement medical cards.
- We are also implementing a beneficiary AVRS specifically to verify coverage information. It will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- As always, beneficiaries are encouraged to contact KMAP Customer Service at 1-800-933-6593 if they have questions or do not have computer access.

Q: Who can I contact with further questions, comments or concerns?
A: For more information on the State of Kansas Medical Card initiative, contact KMAP Customer Service at 1-800-933-6593.