



maryland
health services
cost review commission

Consumer Support and Communications Subgroup - Reimbursements for Hospital Patients

June 7, 2024

Megan Renfrew

Agenda

Topic	Time
Welcome	10:00 - 10:05
Review of Process Change	10:05 - 10:10
Communications / Outreach Campaign	10:10 - 10:35
Web Pages	10:35 - 10:50
Reminders & Next Steps	10:50 - 11:00

Principles for Completing Work

- **Collaboration**

 - Focus on implementing the law with a collaborative spirit

- **Transparency**

 - Ensure that key stakeholders have input to decisions

- **Shared Responsibility**

 - HSCRC will organize the work (project management)

 - State and hospital partners are key to success

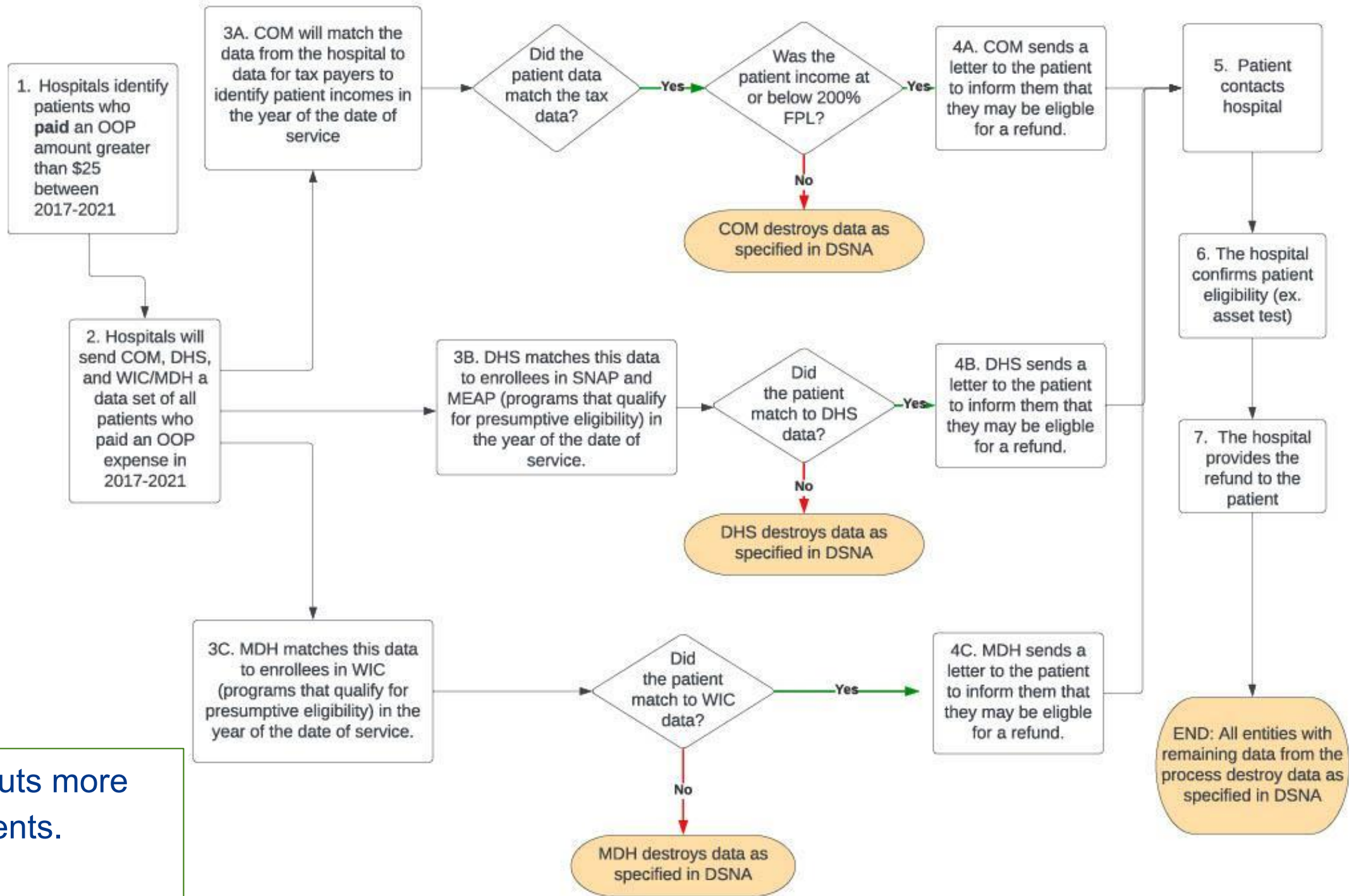
 - Some work will occur between meetings or in smaller groups

Considerations for Discussions

Primary Goal: Providing Refunds to Patients

Other Considerations:

- Fairness / Consistency in Implementation
- Safety of Vulnerable Populations (minimize information in letters, consider which address is best)
- Data Security / Data Privacy
- Legal Authority
- Operational Feasibility



New process puts more burden on patients.

Communications / Outreach Campaign

- New process has higher burden on patients to act.
- Goals of communications campaign (for discussion):
 - Inform patients of refund law.
 - Assure patients that the refund letters are not a scam.

Communications / Outreach Plan

- Plan is to focus on low and non-cost methods (for discussion):
 - Earned media- i.e. coverage in TV, newspapers, etc that is not a result of paid advertising, but rather public interest in the topic.
 - Free or low cost social media (ex. state agency accounts, shared on hospital and advocate accounts).
- Draft social media messages need to be updated to reflect new process and need to make people aware of letters. Volunteers to help?
- HSCRC will coordinate with MDH communications to try to get low/no cost help on visuals and video content.

Webpage

- Review draft webpage text.
- Patients are already starting to ask about refunds. Should we have pages that say that we are still working on setting up the process?
- HSCRC has a webpage for this project, but it is not consumer focused:
<https://hscrc.maryland.gov/Pages/Free-Care-Refunds-Implementation-Updates.aspx>
- HEAU will have a more consumer focused webpage. Text TBD.

Reminders & Next Steps

- Comments on content for letters to patients? Please submit by 6/14.
- Comments on webpage and social media messages by 6/21.
- Coming Soon:
 - Data Template and Instructions
 - Request for hospitals to submit copies of the asset test policies in effect during 2017-2021, if hospital plans to use asset tests for refund eligibility.
 - The MOU, DSNA, and Scope of Work document to share for another round of public comment in June.

Thank you!

- Megan Renfrew, Deputy Director, Policy and Consumer Protection
 - megan.renfrew1@maryland.gov
 - 410-382-3855 (cell)
- Paul Katz, Program Analyst
 - paul.katz@maryland.gov



Appendix

Overview of Law

HSCRC must develop a process that:

1. Identifies patients who paid more than \$25 for hospitals services who may have qualified for free care under Health General §19–214.1 on the date the hospital service was provided during calendar years 2017 through 2021;
2. Provides reimbursement to the identified patients, which may be applied “incrementally”;
3. Ensures that a patient’s alternate address is used if the patient requested an alternate address for safety reasons; and
4. Determines how HSCRC, MDH, DHS, the Office of the Comptroller, and MSDE should share and disclose relevant information, including tax information, to the minimum extent necessary, to the hospital and in accordance with federal and state confidentiality laws for the purpose of carrying out the required process.

HSCRC must coordinate with MDH, DHS, the Office of the Comptroller, MSDE, and the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA).

Health General § 19-214.4, as amended by [Chapter 310 \(2023\)](#)