

CATASTROPHIC ILLNESS IN CHILDREN RELIEF FUND

Fact Sheet

The Massachusetts Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund is intended to provide financial assistance to families with children experiencing a medical condition requiring services that are not otherwise covered by a private insurer, federal or state health care assistance, or any other financial resource.

Who is eligible to apply?

The Fund accepts applications for expenses related to the medical needs of children 18 years old or younger who are residents of Massachusetts. Applicants may be eligible for financial assistance until the day before the child's 19th birthday. The custodial parent(s) or guardian(s) must submit applications for children under the age 18. Applicants who are 18 years of age or younger applicants who are 'emancipated minors' must submit their own applications.

In order to be eligible, a family must have expenses related to a child's medical condition that exceed 10% of the family's gross annual income up to \$100,000 and 15% of any portion of the annual family income that exceeds \$100,000.

The applicant must also be under the care of a licensed health care provider who has staff privileges at a hospital licensed or accredited to provide pediatric or neonatal care.

What expenses are covered?

Financial assistance may include, but is not limited to, payment or reimbursement for the costs of medical treatment, inpatient or outpatient hospital care, prescription drugs, nursing care, and physician services. The Commission will consider other reasonable expenses related to treatment, palliation, habilitation, or rehabilitation for a child's illness or medical condition. The Fund may pay for expenses related to experimental treatment in certain circumstances. In general, the Fund will not pay for treatment in Phase I clinical trials.

Only expenses for which the family is directly responsible as a result of the child's medical condition may be considered for payment or reimbursement. For example, expenses covered by health or other insurance coverage are not eligible in the calculation of total eligible expenses.

Applications may be submitted for:

- *Expenses that are already owed or paid for services that the child has received.* In these cases, the Commission can either directly pay the bills owed to medical providers or other vendors or can reimburse the family directly for bills already paid. (Expenses for services before July 1, 2000 are not eligible for consideration.)
- *Expenses for proposed services.* In these cases, the Commission may agree to assume responsibility for paying bills up to a reasonable limit.

The Fund is the payer of last resort after the family makes reasonable attempts to pursue other funding sources.

Who oversees the Fund?

The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund was established by M.G.L. Chapter 111K. The Fund is administered by the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission, an independent Commission appointed by the Governor. The Commission is the final authority on decisions regarding expenditures from the Fund. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health provides staff support to the Commission.

The Fund receives monies through an annual allotment of \$1 for each employee whose wages are counted as part of employer contributions for unemployment health insurance. The Fund is managed by the State Treasury.

How does one apply for the Fund?

To receive an application for the Fund, call or e-mail:

Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission

c/o Division for Special Health Needs

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

250 Washington Street, 4th floor

Boston, MA 02108-4619

Phone: 800-882-1435

E-mail: division.shn@state.ma.us

Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission

September 14, 2001

Dear Physician:

The purpose of this letter is to introduce you to a new state program that may be beneficial to some of your patients. The **Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund** was established by the Massachusetts Legislature to offer financial assistance to families with extraordinary out-of-pocket expenses related to a child's medical condition. The Fund is administered by the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission, an independent Commission appointed by Governor Jane Swift.

As the chair of the Commission, I would like to briefly introduce the Fund and to let you know that the Commission will make its first public announcement of the Fund's availability in several weeks. As part of Massachusetts' initiatives to recognize **National Child Health Day on Monday October 1, 2001**, the Commission plans to release a media announcement about the Fund and to open a telephone line to accept inquiries.

The Fund will accept applications from families with children age 18 years or younger who have expenses related to a child's medical condition that exceed 10% of the family's gross annual income up to \$100,000 and 15% of any portion of the annual family income that exceeds \$100,000. Expenses may have been already incurred for services the child has received or be contingent on proposed treatment. The Commission may pay outstanding bills directly and may also reimburse the family directly for bills already paid. Financial assistance may include, but is not limited to, payment or reimbursement for the costs of medical treatment, inpatient or outpatient hospital care, prescription drugs, nursing care, and physician services. The Commission will consider other reasonable expenses related to treatment, palliation, habilitation, or rehabilitation for a child's illness or medical condition. The Fund may pay for expenses related to experimental treatment in certain circumstances. The Fund is described in more detail in the enclosed fact sheet.

While families must apply directly to the Fund for financial assistance, the Commission expects that physicians and other health care providers will be significant sources of referral of eligible families. We also recognize that families who learn about the Fund through the media may ask you for further information or advice about applying. If you have additional questions about the Fund, please feel free to call the DPH Division for Special Health Needs at 800-882-1435.

Sincerely,



Nancy Turnbull, Chair

Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission

Commission Members

Nancy Turnbull
Chair

Ex Officio Members
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Department of
Public Health

Andrew Parker
Department of
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Elizabeth Anne Ritcey
Executive Office of
Health and Human
Services

Linda Ruthardt, ARM
Division of Insurance

Public Members
George Annas, JD, MPH

Richard Antonelli, MD

Joseph Carrillo, MD

Marcia Huttner

Dinesh Patel, MD

Mailing Address

Catastrophic Illness in
Children Relief Fund

Department of Public
Health
Division for Special
Health Needs
50 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02108
800-882-1435