

October 8, 2024, HBR Alert



Hurricane Helene Impact

Our thoughts are with everyone impacted by the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene. The role of the State Health Plan is to make sure that impacted State Health Plan members have access to their benefits if and when they need to use them.

If any of your employees have been impacted and you're able to communicate with them, here are a couple of reminders.

- Virtual State Health Plan ID cards are available and can be accessed by logging into Blue Connect via [eBenefits](#). This is also available via the Blue Connect app. For assistance with medical benefits, members can call Blue Cross NC Customer Service at 888-234-2416.
- CVS Caremark, the Plan's Pharmacy Benefit Manager is also available to help those that have been impacted. If members need assistance with their medications, they can call 888-321-3124.
- Aetna, the Plan's TPA as of Jan. 1, 2025, has offered our members the use of Teladoc services for free during this time. Please see the flyer below and share with employees in the impacted areas.

Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment is currently underway and ends Oct. 25, 2024. For the members located in the North Carolina counties listed below the Plan will be extending Open Enrollment by one week. This means impacted members will have until Nov. 1, 2024, to complete their enrollment. To ensure all members

receive new ID cards in a timely manner, the Plan is unable to extend Open Enrollment past this date. The Plan will, however, continue to assist members impacted by Helene via the [enrollment exceptions process](#). As a reminder, members can call the Eligibility and Enrollment Support Center at 855-859-0966 to enroll by phone.

Here are a few detailed notes of how this will work.

- **Tobacco Credit:** For the members in the counties listed below that did not take action during Open Enrollment, the Plan will be placing them in the Base PPO Plan (70/30) for the 2025 benefit year with the tobacco credit applied. In other words, they will not be charged the tobacco surcharge.
- **Enrollment Changes:** After November 1, 2024, members that would like to enroll in the Enhanced PPO Plan (80/20), add or remove dependents or cancel their enrollment for 2025, can make that request through their HBR who can submit an exception. This is the only way to process updates after the enrollment window is closed.
- **2025 ID Cards:** 2025 ID cards will be mailed at the end of November-early December. We realize that some members have been displaced and/or currently do not have access to receive mail. These members will also have access to a virtual ID card through Aetna. They can access their ID card via the Aetna member portal or through Aetna's app. For assistance, members can call Aetna at 833-690-1037.

While the focus is currently on 2025 Open Enrollment, we have not forgotten that there are other enrollment transactions with timelines that may be difficult to complete because of Helene. Impacted employing units and/or members should submit delayed qualifying life event (QLE) exceptions or employment status changes via an [exception](#).

The State Health Plan has requested that the General Assembly enact laws to provide flexibility to the Executive Administrator to relax requirements on the rule on arrears so that employing units are not penalized because employees are not able to make premium payments on time.

Please join us Oct. 10 at 11a.m. for an HBR webinar to discuss this information and offer HBRs the opportunity to ask questions.

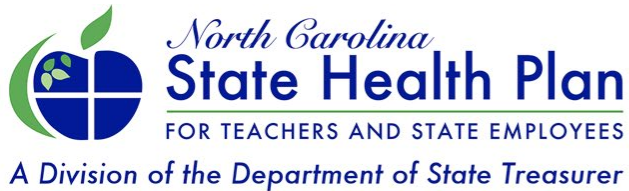
[Click here to register →](#)

North Carolina Counties included in the Helene Exception

Based on FEMA Disaster Designation & Subscriber residential address.

Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Forsyth, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Iredell, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rowan, Rutherford, Stanly, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Union, Yadkin, Yancey, Watauga, and Wilkes.

There are areas outside of North Carolina that are also included in the Helene exception. These areas are designated by the FEMA Disaster Designation & Subscriber residential address as well.



Dale R. Folwell, CPA
STATE TREASURER OF NORTH CAROLINA
DALE R. FOLWELL, CPA