

Alliance for Health Reform Briefing

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Conditions in New York City, September 2001

- **Communications were impaired**
 - **Phone lines were down, so computers were not working**
- **Nothing was business as usual**
- **Emergency decision making was in place**

Disaster Relief Medicaid (DRM) provided immediate coverage under streamlined program rules in New York City.

- **New York State and City implemented DRM on September 24, 2001.**
 - **One-page application**
 - **Self-attestation of income**
 - **No asset test**
 - **8 months of FFS coverage**

- **DRM encompassed broader policy changes.**
 - **Expanded Medicaid eligibility through Family Health Plus**
 - **Enrolled legal immigrants as ordered by NY courts**
 - **Automatic renewal for Medicaid and SCHIP enrollees**

- **342,000 New Yorkers enrolled in DRM in 4 months.**

Characteristics of DRM Enrollees

- **Most reported that they were applying because they had a health problem.**
- **75% did not speak English as their primary language.**
- **97% provided a social security number.**
- **Most heard about DRM through word of mouth.**

DRM marked a radical change in the application and enrollment process, according to its beneficiaries.

- **Many DRM enrollees had abandoned previous efforts to enroll in Medicaid due to the burdensome application process and documentation requirements.**
- **Even though enrollees had only modest savings, removing the asset test was an important factor in helping them get coverage.**
- **The immediate eligibility decision and immediate start of coverage were important to enrollees, many of whom were anxious about their health.**

Key Factors in the Success of Disaster Relief Medicaid

- **Immediate eligibility determination**
- **Dedicated phone number for people to call for information about DRM**
- **Targeted communication to beneficiaries and providers**
 - **Worked with community-based and provider organizations to distribute information about the program**
- **Planning the transition process to traditional Medicaid coverage after the emergency is over**