

### **What if I have to travel to get an abortion?**

Medical Assistance is required to pay a patient's transportation expenses to any medical service that is being paid for by Medical Assistance.

Each county has a Medical Assistance Transportation Program. In Philadelphia, call **WHEELS** 215-563-2000. In other counties, call your Managed Care Organization or County Assistance Office.

For legal help in getting Medical Assistance from DPW or for help in getting Medical Assistance to pay for transportation to medical care, call **Welfare Law Line** 215-227-6485 **Community Legal Services** 215-227-2400


### **Where can I call to get help?**

**CHOICE** 215-985-3300  
toll-free: 800-848-3367  
en español: 215-985-3350  
Call for help with doctors, clinics, or Medicaid HMOs.

**Greater Philadelphia Women's Medical Fund**  
215-772-0602  
Call for no-interest loans for abortions in southeastern Pennsylvania.

**National Abortion Federation Hotline**  
1-800-772-9100  
Call for no-interest loans for abortions outside of southeastern Pennsylvania.

**Women's Law Project**  
215-928-9801 / 412-227-0301  
Call for legal assistance with abortion.



**If you are  
pregnant and  
seriously ill...**

**Pennsylvania  
Medical Assistance  
pays for abortions  
for women whose  
lives are in danger  
because of physical  
or mental illness.**

**CHOICE  
Greater Philadelphia Women's Medical Fund  
Women's Law Project**

With assistance from the  
Institute for Reproductive Health Access  
of the NARAL-NY Foundation

# When does Medical Assistance\* pay for abortion in Pennsylvania?

- **When you are pregnant from rape or incest**
- **When you need an abortion to save your life**

## **How sick must I be to get a Medical Assistance abortion because of a “life threat”?**

If you have Medical Assistance and if continuing your pregnancy would endanger your life, Medical Assistance will pay for an abortion if your doctor signs a form saying that you need the abortion to save your life.

This could be because of a life-threatening physical problem, such as cancer, AIDS, or high blood pressure, or a life-threatening mental or psychological problem, such as severe depression or wanting to kill yourself (suicide). All of these conditions could be considered a “life threat.”

## **What if an illness or condition other than the pregnancy is threatening my life?**

Many serious medical conditions that aren't usually life threatening can become much more dangerous with pregnancy. It doesn't matter whether the threat to your life is caused by the pregnancy or by some other underlying or separate condition. If your doctor believes, in his or her good faith clinical judgment, that an abortion is necessary because your life is in danger, you can get a Medical Assistance-funded abortion if you're otherwise eligible for Medical Assistance.

## **How long will it take to get the abortion?**

You should start the process as soon as you know you are pregnant and are sure of your decision. Seriously ill people often need to get abortions in hospitals instead of clinics, and scheduling a hospital abortion procedure can take time. Don't delay.

## **What forms do I need?**

You will need a “Physician Certification for an Abortion” form (MA-3). The CHOICE hotline or Women's Medical Fund can fax them to your doctor if he or she doesn't have them.

## **What if my doctor won't sign the form?**

If your doctor won't help you get an abortion, you can either go to another doctor or call CHOICE for help. You can also make a complaint to your Medicaid HMO. If you **don't** want an abortion and your doctor is insisting that you get one, call the Women's Law Project right away.

## **Can any doctor fill out the form?**

Any doctor who is treating you may complete the form. That includes your primary care physician, your gynecologist, your psychiatrist, or the doctor who will perform the abortion.

## **Do I need a second physician to certify that my medical condition is life-threatening?**

**NO!** A lawsuit brought by the Women's Law Project, CHOICE, and the Greater Philadelphia Women's Medical Fund in the mid-1990's put an end to the requirement that two doctors certify that the abortion is necessary due to life endangerment. One doctor is enough.

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\*Medical Assistance is also called MA, Medicaid, medical, medical card, or Access. Many people get Medical Assistance through an HMO like Keystone Mercy, HealthPartners, AmeriChoice, Gateway or UPMC/Best. You must be enrolled in Medical Assistance to be eligible for coverage of an abortion.