Massachusetts Self-Verification Guide: Detecting Possible Misuse of Benefits and Services in Your Name (Parents & Caregivers)

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Massachusetts Self-Verification Guide

Detecting Possible Misuse of Benefits and Services in Your Name (Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians)

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Purpose: This document provides a Massachusetts-specific, legally safe pathway for parents, caregivers, and guardians to verify whether public benefits or services were billed, paid, or claimed using their own identity or that of a dependent, and outlines official steps to take when discrepancies are identified.

Introduction

Social media and news reports sometimes describe situations where services appear to have been billed, reimbursed, or publicly funded in a person's name—or a child's name—without the individual's knowledge or consent. In Massachusetts, there is **no centralized public database** that allows a name-based search across all benefit programs.

Records are maintained by administering agencies under state and federal confidentiality laws. The correct approach is **self-verification**: reviewing official records you are legally entitled to access and escalating concerns through formal reporting channels when warranted.

Section 1 — Licensed Child Care Verification (Massachusetts EEC)

Massachusetts licenses and oversees child care programs through the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). EEC publishes an official searchable directory of licensed child care programs.

1.1 Official licensed child care search (public)

Licensed Child Care Search (EEC directory):
https://childcare.mass.gov/findchildcare **[1]**

1.2 Official guide page (explains what the search is for)

Mass.gov guide: "Find a licensed family, group, or school age child care program"
https://www.mass.gov/guides/find-a-licensed-family-group-or-school-age-child-care-program **[2]**

Section 2 — Child Care Financial Assistance (Subsidy) and Payments (Massachusetts EEC)

Massachusetts offers Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) programs to help eligible families pay for child care and out-of-school time. Subsidy payments may be issued to providers on behalf of qualifying families.

2.1 Official CCFA overview

Mass.gov — Child Care Financial Assistance: https://www.mass.gov/child-care-financial-assistance **[3]**

2.2 Apply / access pathway

Mass.gov — Apply for funds to help pay for child care: https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-funds-to-help-pay-for-child-care **[4]**

2.3 Managing assistance (ongoing compliance and updates)

Mass.gov — Managing Child Care Financial Assistance: https://www.mass.gov/guides/managing-child-care-financial-assistance **[5]**

2.4 What parents/guardians should review

- **Eligibility and authorization notices** (approved provider, dates, and any parent fee/copayment).
- **Provider identity** using the official EEC directory (Section 1.1). **[1]**
- **Dates of care** and any mismatch between attendance and what you believe was billed/paid.
- **Ongoing status requirements** as described in EEC assistance guidance (Section 2.3). **[5]**

Section 3 — Health Coverage Claims (MassHealth / Medicaid)

Health services billed under MassHealth (Massachusetts Medicaid) generate formal claims records through plan and program systems. These records are the primary method for verifying whether services were billed in your or your child's name.

3.1 MassHealth program (starting point for member resources)

MassHealth (Mass.gov landing page): https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masshealth **[6]**

3.2 Medicaid fraud investigation/prosecution (Attorney General)

Massachusetts Attorney General — Medicaid Fraud Division: https://www.mass.gov/attorney-generals-medicaid-fraud-division **[7]**

3.3 What to check

- Dates of service (were you/your child present?).
- Provider names and locations you recognize (or do not recognize).
- Claims continuing after coverage changes, or after provider changes.

Section 4 — Public Records Requests (Massachusetts Public Records Law)

Massachusetts public records access is governed by the Massachusetts Public Records Law. Personal case information involving minors and medical information may be exempt; however, parents and guardians may request records they are legally entitled to receive and request an agency explanation of any non-disclosure or redactions.

4.1 Official Public Records Division overview (Secretary of the Commonwealth)

Public Records Division (resources and guidance):
https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/public-records/public-records.htm **[8]**

4.2 Official guide (PDF)

"A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law" (PDF):
https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/public-records/download/guide.pdf **[9]**

4.3 Example public records request page (Mass.gov)

Public records requests for the Secretary of the Commonwealth (instructions and background):
https://www.mass.gov/public-records-requests-for-the-secretary-of-the-commonwealth **[10]**

4.4 Recommended records request structure (practical)

1. Identify yourself as the parent/guardian and specify the dependent(s) involved.
2. Specify the program (CCFA, MassHealth, etc.), provider name, and date range.
3. Request "records sufficient to show" payments/claims made on behalf of your dependent for that period.
4. Ask for a written explanation of any confidentiality limitations or redactions applied.

Section 5 — Reporting Suspected Fraud (Massachusetts Official Channels)

Massachusetts provides official reporting pathways for suspected fraud, waste, or abuse of public funds. Preserve your documents first (letters, notices, attendance records, claim summaries, dates).

5.1 Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General (OIG) — how to report

Mass.gov — How to report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse to the OIG:
https://www.mass.gov/info-details/how-to-report-suspected-fraud-waste-or-abuse-to-the-oig [11]

5.2 Federal Medicaid/health program fraud reporting (HHS OIG)

U.S. HHS OIG — Report fraud (Medicaid/Medicare and other HHS programs):
https://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/ [12]

Section 6 — Public "Red Flag" Patterns (For Awareness Only)

The following markers do not prove misconduct, but they can help families know when to verify records or request clarification:

- **Date mismatch:** claims/payments on days the child was not in care or not receiving the service.
- **Provider mismatch:** provider listed that the family never used.
- **Duration mismatch:** billing continues after termination/withdrawal.
- **Authorization mismatch:** billed hours exceed authorized hours.
- **Identity mismatch:** communications or records referencing a child/dependent you do not recognize.

Appendix A — Official Massachusetts Resources

1. **EEC Licensed Child Care Search:** https://childcare.mass.gov/findchildcare **[1]**
2. **Mass.gov Licensed Child Care Guide:**
   https://www.mass.gov/guides/find-a-licensed-family-group-or-school-age-child-care-program **[2]**
3. **Child Care Financial Assistance:** https://www.mass.gov/child-care-financial-assistance **[3]**
4. **Apply for CCFA:** https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-funds-to-help-pay-for-child-care **[4]**
5. **Manage CCFA:** https://www.mass.gov/guides/managing-child-care-financial-assistance **[5]**
6. **MassHealth (program landing page):** https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masshealth **[6]**
7. **MA AG — Medicaid Fraud Division:**
   https://www.mass.gov/attorney-generals-medicaid-fraud-division **[7]**
8. **Public Records Division (Secretary of the Commonwealth):**
   https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/public-records/public-records.htm **[8]**
9. **Guide to MA Public Records Law (PDF):**
   https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/public-records/download/guide.pdf **[9]**
10. **Mass.gov — Public records requests (Secretary):**
    https://www.mass.gov/public-records-requests-for-the-secretary-of-the-commonwealth **[10]**
11. **Mass.gov — Report fraud to MA OIG:**
    https://www.mass.gov/info-details/how-to-report-suspected-fraud-waste-or-abuse-to-the-oig **[11]**
12. **U.S. HHS OIG — Report fraud:** https://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/ **[12]**

Appendix B — Selected Legal and Policy References (Short Excerpts)

B.1 Massachusetts Public Records Law (official guide)

The Secretary of the Commonwealth publishes an official guide explaining the Public Records Law, including exemptions and request procedures. **[9]**

B.2 Federal CCDF confidentiality (45 CFR Part 98)

Federal CCDF rules include confidentiality requirements for personally identifiable information. eCFR reference: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-98/subpart-B/section-98.15 **[13]**

Short excerpt (confidentiality clause as commonly cited): "policies to govern the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information …" **[14]**

References (Citation List)

1. [1] Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). "Licensed Child Care Search." https://childcare.mass.gov/findchildcare
2. [2] Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Find a licensed family, group, or school age child care program." https://www.mass.gov/guides/find-a-licensed-family-group-or-school-age-child-care-program
3. [3] Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Child Care Financial Assistance." https://www.mass.gov/child-care-financial-assistance
4. [4] Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Apply for funds to help pay for child care." https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-funds-to-help-pay-for-child-care
5. [5] Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Managing child care financial assistance." https://www.mass.gov/guides/managing-child-care-financial-assistance
6. [6] Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "MassHealth." https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masshealth
7. [7] Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Attorney General). "Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Division." https://www.mass.gov/attorney-generals-medicaid-fraud-division
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9. [9] Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth. "A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (PDF)." https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/public-records/download/guide.pdf
10. [10] Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Public Records Requests for the Secretary of the Commonwealth." https://www.mass.gov/public-records-requests-for-the-secretary-of-the-commonwealth
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12. [12] U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General. "Report Fraud." https://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/
13. [13] eCFR. "45 CFR § 98.15 — Assurances and certifications." https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-98/subpart-B/section-98.15
14. [14] Legal Information Institute (Cornell Law School). "45 CFR § 98.15." https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/45/98.15

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