



New to Medicaid? What you need to know

Medicaid helps people with limited incomes afford health care.

The Medicaid program helps people with low or limited incomes access and afford health care. There are no age requirements for Medicaid. It is a health insurance program for children, pregnant people, older adults, and more. For many, Medicaid is the only way they can afford any health care. It is different from Medicare. (Medicare is a health insurance program for adults over 65).

Medicaid is a partnership with the states.

The funding for Medicaid comes from Congress. Each state then adds its own funding to run its state-level Medicaid program. Because the states operate Medicaid, they “brand” their Medicaid plans differently. For example, an Oregonian using Medicaid has health coverage through the “Oregon Health Plan.” A Texan using Medicaid has health coverage through “STAR + PLUS.” [Click here](#) to see what your state calls its Medicaid plan.

Congress funds the bulk of Medicaid. This is why RESULTS advocates for it.

Though it is a partnership with the states, the majority (~90 percent) of Medicaid funding comes Congress. The physical, mental, and financial health of the U.S. is tied to Medicaid with over 79 million enrollees. Any federal changes have a direct effect on how affordable health care is for people surviving poverty. For example, when the Affordable Care Act expanded Medicaid in 2021, [research showed that health disparities for people with lower incomes went down](#). This is why RESULTS advocates speak to their members of Congress protecting and expanding Medicaid.

Almost a quarter of the U.S. population depends on Medicaid. It is enormously effective against poverty.

Seventy-nine million people are enrolled in Medicaid. Thirty million of those are children. Medicaid also disproportionately serves rural communities and people with disabilities. These communities battle poverty at outsized rates. Medicaid is especially effective as an anti-poverty tool in part because it targets supports to these folks so well. Medicaid also provides significant support for births and postpartum care. In fact, Medicaid funds the health care for over 41 percent of births in the U.S. It is also the only public program that covers long-term nursing care for seniors. To learn more about the essential services Medicaid provides, see [this fact sheet from The Center for Law and Social Policy](#).

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