

WHAT EVERY ADVOCATE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT

# Medicaid and Reproductive Rights

In 1965, President Johnson signed into law two important programs: Medicaid and Medicare. These two public health insurance programs were created to provide health insurance to low income men, women and children and in the case of Medicare, provide a form of universal health care to the elderly. Today, with increasing numbers of uninsured individuals and rising costs, health care coverage is back on the front burner.

**Medicaid** is a joint federal-state program that pays for health services for over 52 million low-income individuals. Medicaid is now the nation's largest health care program and the largest source of federal support to states.

When it was enacted in 1965, Medicaid primarily focused on families who were on welfare and provided coverage to mainly single women and children. Over the years, Medicaid coverage has grown to include many elderly, blind and disabled individuals. Even though these groups make up only 25% of all beneficiaries, they account for 69% of the program's costs. Children and their parents, who constitute 75% of all Medicaid beneficiaries, account for only 31% of total expenditures.

Medicaid has income requirements for coverage and extensive documentation is required to enroll. Although both the federal government and states fund Medicaid, states generally have the authority to establish program rules and covered services. As a result, there is state-by-state variation in what is covered and who is eligible.

**Medicare** is a federal program specifically designed for Americans over age 65 and for some people under 65 who have disabilities. Original Medicare has two parts: Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (coverage for doctor services, outpatient hospital care, and some medical services not covered by Part A).

	Medicare	Medicaid
Who does it cover?	Seniors and some people with disabilities	Low-income citizens, including children, families, the elderly and disabled
Who pays for it?	The federal government	The federal government and states together
Who determines who and what it covers?	The federal government	The federal government and the states

**FREE!**  
What could be better?

Apply for the new **FREE Program!**

Find out more.

Call 212-965-7000 to make an appointment with an Entitlement Counselor.

**Birth Control and GYN Care For FREE. For REAL.**

At Planned Parenthood and other places. Completely confidential.

**FREE!**  
What could be better?

No co-payments, monthly payments, or deductibles. You won't pay anything here or at other places for your birth control and GYN visits.

**Covered services include:**

- GYN exams, including Pap tests
- All types of birth control – pills, condoms, the Patch, NuvaRing, and others!
- Emergency contraception (the "morning after" pill)
- Pregnancy testing and counseling
- Make and female sterilization
- STD testing and counseling
- HIV testing and counseling.

**100% confidential.**  
All services provided by Planned Parenthood of NYC are always confidential, including services covered by this free program.

Your application is confidential. You will receive your own insurance card and you can request to have your mail sent to any address you choose.

Find out more. Call 212-965-7000 to make an appointment with an Entitlement Counselor.

Planned Parenthood of New York City, Inc. Health Centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. [www.ppnyc.org](http://www.ppnyc.org)

**Birth Control and GYN Care. For FREE. For REAL.**

**Find out about the new FREE program available to Planned Parenthood of NYC clients!**

- ✓ Covers women, men, and teens
- ✓ Free birth control at the pharmacy
- ✓ Free birth control and GYN visits at Planned Parenthood of NYC and other places throughout New York
- ✓ One year of coverage and then you can renew
- ✓ Apply at any Planned Parenthood of NYC health center

Call 212-965-7000 for an appointment with an Entitlement Counselor.

**The Family Planning Benefit Program is a Medicaid program that provides family planning benefits to men and women ages 10-64 with family incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level. The program covers annual exams, birth control, and HIV and STD testing.**

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## Why is Medicaid important?

Medicaid and all public insurance programs are the first step in providing health insurance to women and their families, men and adolescents. More and more working people are uninsured and constitute the vast majority of those who are currently covered by Medicaid. We need to make sure that applying and maintaining coverage is as easy as possible for all people.

## What does Medicaid have to do with being pro-choice?

First, Medicaid is the largest payer of insurance services in New York State. Medicaid pays for 52% of all births and covers about 15% of all women of reproductive age.

Second, reproductive health services are an essential part of staying healthy. Every woman and adolescent should have coverage for birth control, STI screening and treatment, HIV counseling and testing and abortion services. No woman should have to forgo preventive care like Pap smears, mammograms, contraception and care for their children. This is particularly true for women and families who have limited means and can't afford to miss ongoing preventive care and urgent care when needed.

## ▶ What can I do ?

1. Ask your Congressional representative to reauthorize funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). (SCHIP is a public insurance program for children and adolescents. In New York State, it is called Child Health Plus B. It covers all the reproductive health services covered by Medicaid (except for sterilization) and has no immigration restrictions.)
2. Join us for a lobby day to protect family planning funding
3. Distribute information about the Family Planning Benefit Program to your friends and colleagues
4. Sign up for our Action Network to get breaking news on threats to Medicaid coverage

## ▶ How can I talk about public health insurance?

- Everyone deserves medical care and good health insurance — it's only fair.
- We all benefit when our neighbors are healthy.
- Public health insurance is a straightforward way that we can protect those who are most vulnerable.
- Everyone should get the opportunity to succeed and being healthy is the first step.

## What does Public Health Insurance cover when it comes to Reproductive Health?

### Does public health insurance pay for family planning services?

It depends. Before 2006, states were required to cover family planning as part of the required Medicaid benefit package. The "Deficit Reduction Act" of 2006 eliminated this mandate, and now allows states to continue providing these services, reduce them or eliminate them completely.

### Does public health insurance cover the same thing in every state?

No. The federal government establishes general guidelines for family planning services, but gives states latitude to determine which services they will cover. Most states cover all approved FDA birth control methods, but can restrict coverage of individual services. For example, only 28 states have opted to cover emergency contraception.

### Does Medicaid cover abortion services?

Sometimes. Since 1977, the Hyde Amendment has prohibited the use of federal Medicaid dollars to pay for abortions except in cases of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger. While states are required to cover abortion in these circumstances, it is often difficult for women to obtain MA coverage in these circumstances.

States can decide to use state-only dollars to cover abortion services. Right now seventeen states, including New York, cover abortion services with state-only dollars.

### What reproductive health services are covered by Medicaid in New York State?

In New York State, Medicaid covers a wide range of reproductive health services across the state, including:

- contraceptive education, counseling and methods,
- counseling and testing for HIV,
- testing and treatment for STDS,
- testing for and treatment of breast and cervical cancer,
- abortion services to 24 weeks,
- sterilization, and
- prenatal and perinatal care and obstetric services.

*(Source: Women's Health Directory, New York State Department of Health, [http://www.health.state.ny.us/community/adults/women/womens\\_health\\_directory/docs/womens\\_health\\_directory.pdf](http://www.health.state.ny.us/community/adults/women/womens_health_directory/docs/womens_health_directory.pdf))*