



Immigrants and Health Program Access in Colorado

This brief offers a recap of the availability of points of access to healthcare and health insurance for immigrants in Colorado and explores steps other states are taking to enhance access for immigrants.

In Colorado, 46 percent of uninsured children reside in immigrant families, the ninth-highest percent in the nation. Children in immigrant families are defined as U.S. citizen and/or non-citizen children residing with non-citizen parents.ⁱ

Points of Access to Health Programs:

Medicaid/CHP+: “Qualified alien”: Federally funded Medicaid and CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) are available to otherwise eligible “qualified” immigrants who entered the U.S. before August 22, 1996, and those who have been in a “qualified” status for five years or longer.ⁱⁱ

Exceptions to the five-year bar:

Refugees and other “humanitarian” immigrants, veterans, active duty military and their spouses and children, and certain other immigrants are eligible for Medicaid or CHP+ without a five-year waiting period.

As of July 1, 2015, lawfully present children and pregnant women are no longer subject to the five-year bar in Colorado.

Colorado Indigent Care Program (CICP): Lawfully present aliens and U.S. citizens who are not Medicaid eligible and have incomes under 250% FPL may qualify for CICP. CICP is not an insurance program, but a reimbursement mechanism for participating hospitals and primary care clinics. Enrollees are subject to sliding scale co-payments. The five-year bar does not apply.

Hospital payment assistance program: All uninsured Coloradans under 250% FPL are eligible for the hospital payment assistance program, established by SB12-134, regardless of immigration status. Those eligible are billed for hospital care at the lowest rate negotiated with any private payer. The program requires that applicants be screened for eligibility for Medicaid/CHP+/CICP.

Old Age Pension (OAP) Medical Care Program: This program is available to lawfully present immigrants age 60 or over. Participants must be ineligible for Medicaid and enrolled in the Old Age Pension program. The program is limited in scope and excludes long-term care and psychiatric services. The five-year bar was applied to this program beginning January 1, 2014.

Advance Premium Tax Credits (APTC) – APTC are available through Connect for Health Colorado to lawfully present aliens under 400% FPL, including persons who would be income eligible for Medicaid but are subject to the five year bar. Aliens ineligible for Medicaid because of sponsor deeming may be eligible for APTC.

Emergency Medicaid: is available to undocumented immigrants who but for their status meet the eligibility requirements for Medicaid. Coverage extends only to the emergency, and includes coverage of labor and delivery and 60 days post-partum care.

What other states are doingⁱⁱⁱ

A number of states offer prenatal care regardless of status.

Some by taking a federal CHIP option to cover the “unborn child”:
Arkansas, California, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin.

Some through a state-only program: D.C., New York, New Jersey.

Some states offer state only coverage for undocumented children: California, D.C. Illinois Maryland (Montgomery County).

Colorado does not offer prenatal care to undocumented women.

In the news: California:

The California legislature just authorized a statewide program in June to include undocumented children in Medi-Cal using state-only dollars.

The County Medical Services Program just authorized health coverage for the undocumented in 35 California counties. Although budgetary constraints have historically prevented such measures, “in recent years the expansion of Medi-Cal and the creation of the state’s health exchange under the Affordable Care Act have dramatically reduced the population it serves, leaving it with about \$225 million in reserves,” according to the Sacramento Bee.

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents):

Some states with state only programs to cover immigrants residing in the U.S. under color of law have included DACA children and their DAPA parents under their state only

Medicaid programs. The Federal Government explicitly stated when authorizing DACA and DAPA that these groups are not Medicaid/CHIP or APTC eligible.

A note on IDs: Many citizens have had access to public benefits restricted as a result of Colorado ID requirements, which while designed to prohibit entry of aliens in to public programs have had the effect of restricting access to U.S. Citizens. For more information and help see Colorado Collaborative ID Project at:

<http://www.coloradoidproject.org/>

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ⁱ <http://www.coloradokids.org/nearly-half-of-uninsured-children-in-colorado-are-children-in-immigrant-families/>

ⁱⁱ For information about Qualified Alien status and eligibility for public benefits see: <http://www.nilc.org/overview-immeligfedprograms.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.nilc.org/health.html>