

Refugee Services

Reimbursement and Billing FAQs

<https://www.healthcare.gov/immigrants/lawfully-present-immigrants/>

1. Are refugees eligible for Medicaid?

Immigrants who are “qualified non-citizens” are generally eligible for coverage through Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), if they meet their state’s income and residency rules.

In order to get Medicaid and CHIP coverage, many qualified non-citizens (such as many LPRs or green card holders) have a 5-year waiting period. This means they must wait 5 years after receiving “qualified” immigration status before they can get Medicaid and CHIP coverage. There are exceptions. For example, refugees, asylees, or LPRs who used to be refugees or asylees don’t have to wait 5 years.

The term “qualified non-citizen” includes:

- Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR/Green Card Holder)
- Asylees
- Refugees
- Cuban/Haitian entrants
- Paroled into the U.S. for at least one year
- Conditional entrant granted before 1980
- Battered non-citizens, spouses, children, or parents
- Victims of trafficking and his or her spouse, child, sibling, or parent or individuals with a pending application for a victim of trafficking visa
- Granted withholding of deportation
- Member of a federally recognized Indian tribe or American Indian born in Canada
- Citizens of the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau who are living in one of the U.S. states or territories (referred to as Compact of Free Association or COFA migrants)

Medicaid & CHIP coverage for lawfully residing children and pregnant women

States have the option to remove the 5-year waiting period and cover lawfully residing children and/or pregnant women in Medicaid or CHIP. A child or pregnant woman is “lawfully residing” if they’re “lawfully present” and otherwise eligible for Medicaid or CHIP in the state. Learn how someone is defined as lawfully present.

Twenty-nine states, plus the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, have chosen to provide Medicaid coverage to lawfully residing children and/or pregnant women without a 5-year waiting period. Twenty-one of these states also cover lawfully residing children or pregnant women in CHIP. Find out if your state has this option in place.

Getting emergency care

Medicaid provides payment for treatment of an emergency medical condition for people who meet all Medicaid eligibility criteria in the state (such as income and state residency), but don’t have an eligible immigration status.

Medicaid, CHIP, & “public charge” status

Applying for or receiving Medicaid or CHIP benefits or getting savings for health insurance costs in the Marketplace, doesn’t make someone a “public charge”. This means it won’t affect their chances of

becoming a Lawful Permanent Resident or U.S. citizen.

There's one exception for people receiving long-term care in an institution at government expense, like in a nursing facility. These people may face barriers getting a green card.

2. Can a LHD bill Medicaid for Refugee Health Screenings?

- **No** – the LHDs are paid a flat fee:
“The directive we have from the HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is that if their Medicaid is active at the time of the health screening, the health screening should be billed to Medicaid.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/cma/about>

However, most LHDs are not fully implementing Medicaid, nor do they have the capacity, nor do they have contracts with all the MCOs in HealthChoice. So for any health screenings that occur at the LHDs, rather than bill Medicaid, we are providing them with a flat fee reimbursement that is funded through ORR called “Refugee Medical Assistance.”

- LHDs cannot receive a flat fee reimbursement *and* also bill Medicaid for these health screenings.

3. Can a LHD bill Medicaid for Refugee Immunization Services?

- **Adult Immunizations:**
Yes, if the LHDs have adult vaccines in-stock.
- **Children Immunizations:**
Yes, a child can receive their immunizations through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.