

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IMPACT ALERT: CHILDREN’S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

In Pennsylvania, Medicaid, also called Medical Assistance (or MA), pays for tens of thousands of children to receive needed behavioral health services *at no cost to their parents*, and often in their own homes, schools, and communities.

When behavioral health services are determined by a doctor and an MA health plan to be medically necessary, they may include outpatient therapy, in-home aides, behavior consultants, school or community aides, specialized autism treatment, medication management, residential treatment programs, acute care hospital stays, and more. These home and community-based services are called by different names, e.g., wraparound, Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS), Applied Behavior Analysis, outpatient therapy, partial hospitalization, and so on.

If your child is receiving behavioral health services with no copayment or deductible, their services are most likely being funded, in full or in part, by Medicaid.

Pennsylvania’s Medicaid delivery system, called HealthChoices, is complicated. It delivers behavioral health services through five county-based managed healthcare plans across the state. Children enrolled in the HealthChoices **behavioral** health plans are also enrolled in one of a different set of HealthChoices **physical** health plans (see link). Also, many children enrolled in Pennsylvania’s HealthChoices plans are also enrolled in commercial plans through their parents’ insurance – plans that do not cover many of these services, or do not cover them in full.

If your child is enrolled in one of the Medicaid funded **physical** health plans, then they are automatically enrolled in one of the following **behavioral** health plans:

- Community Behavioral Health (CBH) (in Philadelphia)
- Magellan Behavioral Health of PA (MBH) (in Bucks, Cambria, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Bedford and Somerset counties)
- PerformCare (in Franklin, Fulton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, and Perry counties)
- Carelon Health of PA, Inc. (in Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Crawford, Fayette, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Washington, and Westmoreland counties)
- Community Care Behavioral Health (CCBHO) (in Allegheny, and every other county not listed above)

About half of the Medicaid funds your child’s plan receives is from the federal government. A new federal law will drastically cut those federal Medicaid funds in coming years. To learn more about how those cuts might affect your child’s health services, go to www.imaginedifferent.org/medicaiddefense.

OBBBA, signed into law on July 4, 2025, includes significant cuts to federal Medicaid spending, which are expected to total around \$1 trillion over 10 years. The cuts are projected to cause millions of people to lose their health coverage. In the coming years, Pennsylvania’s leaders will need to make difficult decisions as to how to implement these massive cuts within our state. In preparation for the difficult decisions ahead, the Coalition intends to keep stakeholders informed as to Medicaid’s benefits for children with developmental disabilities and their families;