



## Medicaid in the District of Columbia

### *A Brief Overview*

#### What is Medicaid?

- Medicaid provides health coverage for low-income children and adults, medical and long-term care coverage for people with disabilities, and assistance with health and long-term care expenses for low-income seniors. Nationally, more than 58 million people – 29 million of whom are children -- rely on Medicaid services.<sup>1</sup>

#### Who is Eligible for Medicaid?<sup>2</sup>

- Low-income children, pregnant women, parents, elderly or disabled individuals are eligible. Due to recent changes under national health reform, childless adults are now also eligible for the first time. Recipients must meet income guidelines and some must meet asset limits.
- Recipients must be U.S. citizens or have been legal permanent residents for more than 5 years.
- Children (0-18) and pregnant women are eligible up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) – \$67,050 for a family of four (in 2011).
- Youth (19-20), parents of enrolled children and childless adults are eligible up to 200% FPL – \$44,700 for a family of four.

#### How Many People Are on Medicaid?

- Medicaid covers approximately 145,000 people in DC<sup>3</sup> – 25% of all DC residents and 61% of children.<sup>4</sup>
- About half of Medicaid beneficiaries are children.<sup>5</sup>

#### What Does Medicaid Cover?

- Medicaid offers a comprehensive package of benefits including inpatient hospital care, outpatient physician visits, emergency services, prescription drugs, mental health care, rehabilitative services, home health care and dental and vision services.
- In addition to all listed services, children have an extensive right to any services that are “medically necessary” based on a provision of the federal Medicaid law.<sup>6</sup>
- Many services that young children (0-3) receive through Early Intervention are also paid for by Medicaid. Services include screenings and assessments, and physical, speech and occupational therapy.

## How is Medicaid Structured?

- Most members select a managed care organization (MCO) through which to receive their benefits. The two current MCOs in DC are Chartered and UnitedHealthCare Community Plan (formerly called Unison). There is also an MCO just for children and young adults with special needs, Health Services for Children with Special Needs.
- Some individuals (children in foster care, elderly and disabled individuals) receive direct fee-for-service care rather than going through a MCO.

## How is Medicaid Funded?

- Medicaid is jointly funded by the federal government and DC.
- The federal government pays 70% of each dollar DC spends on Medicaid. Medicaid is the single largest source of federal funding to DC. In FY08, DC received \$1.1 billion from the federal government for its Medicaid program.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Families USA, *About Medicaid*, <http://www.familiesusa.org/issues/medicaid/about-medicaid.html>

<sup>2</sup> DC Department of Health Care Finance, *Medicaid Fact Sheet* (Feb. 17, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> DC Department of Health Care Finance, *Medicaid Annual Report FY2008* at 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 10.

<sup>6</sup> The Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) provision requires a comprehensive health care benefits package for all Medicaid-eligible children under age 21. 42 USC § 1396(a)(43).

<sup>7</sup> DC Department of Health Care Finance, *Medicaid Annual Report FY2008* at 18.