

Fact Sheet

Early Intervention Services in Medicaid Managed Care

Medicaid Transformation and the transition to Managed Care impacts Medicaid services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and/or developmental delays

In accordance with Part C of the federally-enacted Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the NC Division of Public Health - Early Intervention Branch serves as the lead agency for the NC Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP). The NC ITP ensures the provision of early intervention services and supports to children up to age three (3) who present with a physical, cognitive, communicative, social, emotional or adaptive disability or established condition that will very likely cause a developmental delay. When possible, services are provided in natural environments where children live, learn and play (such as homes, community locations and early childhood programs) and where children would be if they did not have a developmental delay or disability.

These services are often provided by a Children's Development Services Agency (CDSA) as part of an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) and, for children covered by Medicaid, billed to the State of North Carolina. NC Medicaid is in the process of a transformation that will change the way Medicaid services are provided. This change also impacts the provision of services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and/or developmental delays.

DHHS wants to ensure that independent practitioners who wish to continue providing NC ITP services to Medicaid-enrolled children contract with the Medicaid Managed Care health plans. Given the specialized knowledge and skills required to serve children up to age 3, service availability is critical, especially in rural areas. To continue the implementation of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system that provides critical early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities or delays, it is imperative that health plans contract with the independent contractors who are currently providing ITP services to Medicaid-enrolled children.

This fact sheet provides background and links to resources regarding how NC Medicaid Managed Care will impact these services.



HOW ARE NC-ITP SERVICES CURRENTLY PROVIDED?

Most NC ITP services are provided by independent practitioners who currently bill fee-for-service for Medicaid-enrolled children. After the transition to Medicaid Managed Care, these independent practitioners will need to bill the appropriate health plan for Medicaid-covered services on the IFSP that are not provided and billed by the child's local CDSA.

To comply with IDEA and maximize the State's capacity to provide quality early intervention services, 16 CDSAs across North Carolina collaborate with local providers to ensure services are provided to families and children in need.

WHICH SERVICES ARE COVERED BY NC MEDICAID DIRECT?

Services provided *and* billed by CDSAs are covered by NC Medicaid Direct for Medicaid-enrolled children and billed to the State. Please reference the following for more information: [Session Law 2017-57](#), Senate Bill 257, which states, "Services provided and billed by Children's Development Services Agency (CDSA) that are included on the child's Individualized Family Service Plan" are not covered by Medicaid Managed Care.

Important: As the legislation is written, only services provided *and* billed by a CDSA are exempt from managed care and therefore covered by NC Medicaid Direct.

WHICH EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES ARE COVERED BY MEDICAID MANAGED CARE?

All services provided to Medicaid-enrolled children by independent ITP practitioners are covered by Medicaid Managed Care and must be billed to the child's Medicaid Managed Care health plan. The exemption provided by Session Law 2017-57, Senate Bill 257 *does not apply to independent practitioners.*

Medicaid-covered Early Intervention services include:

- Audiological services
- Case management
- Clinical social work services
- Community-based rehabilitative services (CBRS)
- Developmental testing nutrition services
- Medical services
- Multidisciplinary evaluations and assessments
- Occupational therapy services
- Physical therapy services
- Psychological services
- Speech and language services

HOW DO BENEFICIARIES SELECT MANAGED CARE HEALTH PLANS?

Medicaid beneficiaries may choose and enroll in a health plan during open enrollment. Statewide open enrollment begins March 15, 2021 and ends on May 14, 2021. When open enrollment ends, Medicaid beneficiaries who have not selected a health plan will be auto-enrolled into a health plan.

Beneficiaries can enroll in plans in various ways.

- Call 833-870-5500 (toll free)
- Go online to ncmedicaidplans.gov
- Complete the paper enrollment form found in their enrollment packet and returning it by fax or mail
- Use the NC Medicaid Managed Care mobile app
- Be auto-enrolled by not choosing by the May 14, 2021 deadline.

See the Provider Playbook for more information on [Beneficiary Enrollment and Timelines](#).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CONTRACT WITH HEALTH PLANS IN ADVANCE OF JULY 1, 2021?

Any independent practitioners contracted with CDSA who does not contract with health plans by July 1, 2021, risks losing patients, as Medicaid Managed Care beneficiaries will be required to obtain services from in network providers for the health plan.

If a contract is not in place by July 1, 2021, and the provider has not engaged in good faith negotiations, the provider is at risk for being reimbursed at 90 percent for out-of-network services and subject to additional prior authorizations. There is no Medicaid rate floor for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language therapy and audiology therapy services.

WHO SHOULD PROVIDERS CONTACT IF THEY ARE HAVING TROUBLE ENROLLING IN MEDICAID?

Providers who are having trouble enrolling should contact NCTracks Call Center at 800-688-6696 or visit the [Provider Enrollment](#) page.

WHO SHOULD PROVIDERS CONTACT IF THEY WISH TO CONTRACT WITH A HEALTH PLAN?

Providers should reference the [Health Plan Contacts and Resources](#) page to contact the health plan with whom they want to contract. More information can also be found on the [Provider Contracting with Health Plans](#) page.