Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute™

Northwestern Medicine®
Feinberg School of Medicine

Medicaid: Primary Care Access for Children

Jennifer Kusma Saper, MD MS
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
May 30, 2025

BEST CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS
U.S.News & WORLD REPORT
RANKED IN 11 SPECIALTIES
2024-2025

Medicaid Landscape and Challenges Today

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

The Children Medicaid Covers:

- Medicaid covers **4 in 10** children
- Medicaid covers over **8 in 10** children living in poverty
- **Greater share** of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian and Alaskan Native children
- **41%** of all births in the United States
- **Half** of children with special health care needs

Public Insurance and Health Equity

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage Enrolled in Public Health Insurance
American Indian/Alaska Native	59%
Asian	29%
Non-Hispanic Black	60%
Hispanic	55%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	52%
Non-Hispanic White	30%

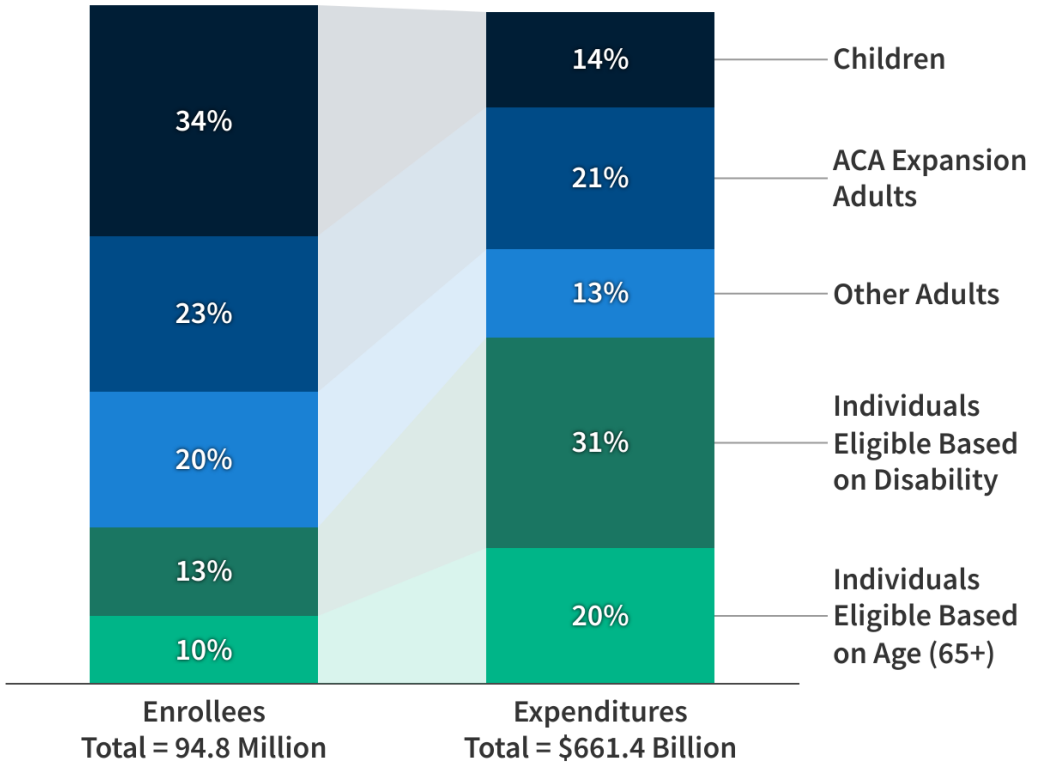
Medicaid is a strong investment for children

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

- Children make up the largest group in Medicaid, however they account for the smallest percentage of spending

Figure 5

People Who Qualify for Medicaid Based on Age or Disability Account for More than Half of Spending.



Note: Includes full and partial benefit enrollees enrolled in at least one month of Medicaid during 2021. Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: KFF analysis of the T-MSIS Research Identifiable Files, CY 2021

KFF

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Strong Investment in Children

Less chronic disease in adulthood

Lower rate of teenage pregnancy

Higher rates of high school graduation

Increased college enrollment

Higher future wages

Concerns with Current Medicaid/CHIP

- Joint Fed/state financing, with wide state variations in: Eligibility, enrollment, covered benefits/scope, payment, quality standards
- Medicaid and CHIP have different rules, match rates, benefits, and eligibility
- Variations lead to substantial inequities and barriers to primary and subspeciality care
- Impact on families and pediatricians

Health Equity Concerns

Persistent geographic segregation → disproportionate number of Black and Latino children in poor communities with high rates of Medicaid insurance

Generally, states with higher population rates of minoritized children/youth have less generous Medicaid programs; spend less on their Medicaid population

States pay approximately two-thirds of Medicare rates for the same services. Medicare rates are about 75% of commercial rates.

Where do we go from here?

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

POLICY STATEMENT Organizational Principles to Guide and Define the Child Health Care System and/or Improve the Health of all Children

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program: Optimization to Promote Equity in Child and Young Adult Health

Jennifer D. Kusma, MD, MS, FAAP,[a] Jean L. Raphael, MD, MPH, FAAP,[b] James M. Perrin, MD, FAAP,[c] Mark L. Hudak, MD, FAAP,[d]
COMMITTEE ON CHILD HEALTH FINANCING

Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute™

Northwestern Medicine® Feinberg School of Medicine

Policy Statement Vision

The AAP envisions a child and adolescent health care system that provides individualized, family-centered, equitable, and comprehensive care that integrates with community resources to help each child and family achieve optimal growth, development, and well-being.

Foundational Changes

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Eligibility and Enrollment

Coverage and Care

Financing

Foundational Changes

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Eligibility and Enrollment

Coverage and Care

Financing

Eligibility and Enrollment

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Goal: *All children (0-26 years) in the United States should have access to health insurance coverage*

Eligibility and Enrollment

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

- Universal eligibility for all children **up to age 26 years** residing in the United States
- Automatic enrollment in a combined Medicaid and CHIP program at birth of all infants born in the United States, with the option to opt out of coverage
- Guarantee health insurance coverage without reverification of eligibility until age 6 years and no more than every 2 years thereafter

Additional Eligibility and Enrollment Steps

Eligibility and Enrollment

- Continuous enrollment from newborn period to 6 years old
- Minimum 2-year-continuous eligibility periods
- Medicaid and CHIP alignment so that children can maintain continuous coverage with income changes
- Cross-state coverage support
- Expanded eligibility for immigrant families

Foundational Changes

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Eligibility and Enrollment

Coverage and Care

Financing

Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute™

Northwestern Medicine® Feinberg School of Medicine

Coverage and Care

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Goal: *Children (0-26 years) insured by Medicaid/CHIP should have meaningful access to a consistent, high-quality set of services and supports that meets their health needs*

Coverage and Care

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

- Uniform Medicaid and CHIP program and benefit design and implementation that effectively supports the needs of children, youth, and families with uniform access across all states

- Implementation of a federal Medicaid/CHIP core drug benefit setting minimum requirements for state formularies

Additional Coverage Steps

- Full implementation and monitoring of the EPSDT benefit
- Standard medical necessity definition across state lines
- Standard measure set and creation of a Medicaid Claims Database
- Incorporate racial and health equity analysis into the development and evaluation of Medicaid and CHIP policies

Foundational Changes

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Eligibility and Enrollment

Coverage and Care

Financing

Financing

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago®

Goal: *Medicaid program financing should facilitate a robust, high-quality network of providers, services, and supports*

Financing

- Major increases in the federal share of funding of the Medicaid/CHIP programs
- Especially for all direct patient care, to eliminate state variations that contribute to unequal access to care
- Federal minimum rate schedule with an end to undervalued Medicaid payment
- Rates at least comparable to prevailing Medicare rates and support the full range of services needed to provide comprehensive care to children

Additional Financing Steps

Financing

- Expand federal oversight of program enrollment, payment, and quality
- Augment resources and adjust payments for health-related social needs
- Enable access to integrated mental health supports regardless of diagnosis

Questions?

Thank you!

jksaper@luriechildrens.org