

EPSDT Parent Fact Sheet

What is Medicaid?

Medicaid is a federal/state health insurance program administered by the states and funded from federal and state revenues. The program assists states in the provision of adequate medical care to eligible persons. The Medicaid program varies from state to state, and states can make alterations in their programs from year to year. Within broad national guidelines, each state establishes its own eligibility standards; determines the type, amount, duration and scope of services; sets payment rates; and administers its own program.

What is EPSDT?¹

Early and Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) is a mandatory Medicaid service that was developed to provide preventive services and treatment to children enrolled in Medicaid. The components of EPSDT are as follows:

Early: Assessing a child's health early in life so that potential diseases and disabilities can be prevented or detected in the early stages, when they can be most effectively treated;

Periodic: Assessing a child's health at key points in her/his life to assure continued healthy development;

Screening: Using tests and procedures to determine if children being examined have conditions requiring closer medical (including mental health) or dental attention;

Diagnostic: Determining the nature and cause of conditions identified by screenings and those that require further attention; and

Treatment: Providing services needed to control, correct, or reduce physical and mental health problems.

EPSDT services for eligible children include:

- Screening services, including the following:
 - a comprehensive physical and mental health assessment,
 - a regularly scheduled physical examination,
 - laboratory tests, including blood lead level,
 - dental services, including restoration of teeth and maintenance of dental health,
 - immunizations, and
 - health education.
- Vision testing and services, including eyeglasses,
- Hearing testing and services, including hearing aids,
- Referral to mental health practitioners for follow-up screening and diagnosis,
- Assistance with transportation and scheduling of appointments, and
- Any other health care service covered by Medicaid necessary to correct or improve illnesses and conditions found in screening, even if the service is not included in a state's Medicaid plan but could have been elected by the state.

Who is eligible for EPSDT?

EPSDT services are available to all children under age 21 who are eligible for Medicaid. If a family receives adoption assistance under the federally funded title IV-E program, then the adopted child is automatically eligible for Medicaid and EPSDT services. Adopted children in families receiving state-funded adoption assistance are also eligible for EPSDT services if they receive Medicaid.

Who can provide EPSDT services?

A physician, nurse practitioner, pediatrician, or other type of health care provider who is certified by the state Medicaid program to be a Medicaid provider may provide EPSDT services. You may find a certified health care provider located at your local child care or Head Start program, school-based health center, state or local health department, managed care organization (MCO), physician offices, Indian Health Service Center or Community Health Center.

A child may need more than one provider to receive the full range of EPSDT services for which he or she is entitled. If more than one provider is needed to complete the full range of EPSDT services to a child, these services should be coordinated to ensure the child receives all the necessary services and to avoid duplication. However, most children who have a family health care provider will receive most of their EPSDT screening, diagnostic, and treatment services from the same provider.

When are services available?

Each state sets a timetable as to when screening services are available. Screening services are always available between regularly scheduled exams if there is reason to suspect an illness or condition.

Diagnostic services are covered whenever a screening examination indicates the need to conduct a more in-depth evaluation. The purpose of diagnosis is to determine the nature, cause, and extent of the problem found by the screening examination. This diagnosis may then result in development of a plan for treatment.

Treatment services are covered whenever they are medically necessary to correct or improve abnormalities, physical or mental illnesses, or other conditions discovered through an EPSDT screening.

¹The federal law for EPSDT can be found at: 42 C.F.R. §441.50, and §441.55-441.60

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EPSDT: Bridging the Gap in Medicaid Coverage from State to State

When a family with a child receiving adoption assistance moves from one state to another, the family may find that services that were provided in their previous state of residence for their child are not covered under Medicaid in their new state. Although all states have Medicaid programs, the services offered in individual states vary greatly.

For example, if a child receiving speech therapy through Medicaid in State A (the adoption assistance state) moves to State B where speech therapy is not a covered service under Medicaid, the family could request this service through EPSDT. State B can accept State A's determination that speech therapy is 'medically necessary' or can require that the child be screened in State B. If State B determines that speech therapy is medically necessary for the child, State B can provide the service to the child through EPSDT.

How do I ensure that my child receives EPSDT Services?

If a child is denied EPSDT services, parents may appeal by requesting a fair hearing. A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions. Each state has its own policies and procedures that govern the fair hearing process. A summary of the fair hearing process in each state can be found on-line at the Child Welfare Information Gateway at: http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adopt_assistance/ (see Question 10).

EPSDT can provide children consistency in receiving health care services when moving from state to state. It provides a mechanism for children to receive any medically necessary service allowed under Medicaid, even if that service is not included in a particular state's Medicaid plan. EPSDT is a valuable service for families with Medicaid-eligible children who move to a new state.

This document is available at: <http://aaicama.org>



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