

How Does Medicaid Eligibility Work For People Who Are Incarcerated?

Background

In Medicaid, incarceration does not make a person ineligible. People who are held involuntarily in a correctional facility may be eligible for and enrolled in Medicaid. However, federal Medicaid funds may not be used to pay for services for people while they are incarcerated, except when they are inpatients in a medical institution for 24 hours or more. There are some limited exceptions that allow the use of federal Medicaid funds for youth and young adults who are incarcerated. ND Medicaid suspends Medicaid eligibility while an individual is incarcerated.

Applications

- People may apply and be approved for ND Medicaid coverage while they are incarcerated. ND Medicaid suspends Medicaid eligibility while an individual is incarcerated.
- People who don't have coverage are encouraged to apply for Medicaid soon after they become incarcerated.
- Applications for people who are incarcerated are processed by the state in the order received and are not held for processing later.
- ND Health and Human Services is working with the ND Department of Corrections and local jails to provide information, resources, and support to assist people with applying for Medicaid.

Eligibility Reviews

- People who are incarcerated will continue to have Medicaid eligibility reviews while they are suspended. ND Medicaid will attempt to renew the member's eligibility using data sources, without reaching out to the member unless further information is needed. If further information is needed, a review form will be sent. Members can receive and respond to mail while incarcerated.
- Reviews for people who are incarcerated are processed by the state in the order received. Reviews are not held until release for members who are incarcerated.

Covered Services

- Federal Medicaid rules prohibit states from paying for covered services for a person who is incarcerated. States may pay for some inpatient services when a person is hospitalized in a medical institution for 24 hours or more.
- ND Medicaid suspends Medicaid eligibility while a person is incarcerated. Suspended eligibility means that the incarcerated person remains eligible for Medicaid, but limits payment of covered services to hospitalizations lasting 24 hours or more.

What Happens Upon Release?

- ND Medicaid unsuspends the person's coverage, so it is effective when they are released. ND Medicaid needs to know where the person is released to, so our records can be updated accordingly.
- For questions or updates regarding Medicaid eligibility, contact 1.866.614.6005 or applyforhelp@nd.gov.