

NC Health Check

OVERVIEW

What is it?

The NC Health Check program is a statewide Medicaid initiative to improve Medicaid-eligible children's access to preventive health services. Medicaid-eligible children are eligible to receive comprehensive health care check-ups, immunizations, vision, hearing and dental screening services on a regular basis throughout childhood. Any medically necessary diagnostic or treatment services needed to treat the conditions identified during the screenings will also be covered.

Who is it for?

Medicaid-eligible children from birth through age 20.

Where are applications taken?

To receive NC Health Check services, a child must be eligible for Medicaid. Medicaid applications are taken at the county Department of Social Services, as well as some health departments, hospitals and migrant and community health centers. In addition, there are NC Health Check coordinators in 62 counties who can assist families in obtaining needed medical benefits and can help families access other needed community services.

INTRODUCTION

The NC Health Check program, formerly known as the Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment program (EPSDT), is a comprehensive health service for Medicaid-eligible children. NC Health Check provides a series of well-child check-ups including: health history, physical examination, nutritional assessment, health education, measurements and blood pressure screenings, developmental screenings (which include mental, emotional and behavioral assessments), and laboratory work-ups for children birth through age 20. The program also helps pay for any diagnostic tests or treatment necessary to ameliorate any problems identified during the preventive screenings. The goal of this program is to ensure that children are linked with a medical provider and that they receive early and periodic screenings to identify potential health problems and to ensure that their health care needs are being met.

BENEFITS/ SERVICES

The NC Health Check program will pay for an array of periodic health screenings as well as most diagnostic, treatment services, or health care equipment needed to address the child's health needs. In addition, the NC Health Check program has certain key programmatic components necessary to ensure that children receive the full array of allowable services.

Medical Services

Medicaid, through the NC Health Check program, will pay for periodic physicals, immunizations, and all the follow-up treatment identified by the provider. Infants are entitled to five well-child visits in the first year, three in the second year, an annual visit for the child's third through sixth years, and one check-up every three years thereafter. The child is also entitled to the full range of Medicaid covered services (see Medicaid, chapter 7). There are no service limitations or cost-sharing imposed on health services for children participating in the NC Health Check program.

Other Key Programmatic Components

- *Provider recruitment efforts.* The NC Health Check program works in collaboration with professional associations to increase the number of primary care providers participating in the Medicaid program.
- *Outreach/Education efforts.* The state helps pay for outreach and education efforts to educate Medicaid recipients about available NC Health Check services and the importance of early and periodic well-child visits. The state operates a toll-free hotline, distributes general community education materials including print materials, public service announcements, and billboards, and sends direct written information to Medicaid eligible families.
- *Toll-free Hotline.* NC Family Health Resource line (1-800-367-2229) provides up-to-date information, referrals and advocacy services. The Hotline provides information in English and Spanish on preconception and pregnancy, breastfeeding, infant care and child health, adolescent health, parenting skills, family planning, nutrition, and substance abuse treatment and referral. The line operates from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Fridays. Services are available for the deaf and hard of hearing at: 1-800-976-1922 (TTY).
- *NC Health Check Coordinators.* The NC Health Check program has created a network of specialty-trained health care staff to assist families in obtaining medical services as well as referrals to other community services. The coordinators assist with outreach efforts, transportation and in scheduling appointments. NC Health Check coordinators will also make phone calls or home visits to work with families who have missed screening appointments or visits for high-risk diagnostic referrals. Most NC Health Check coordinators are housed in local health departments or community and rural health centers. They currently serve 62 counties around the state.
- *NC Health Check Information System.* The state also has an automated information and notification system that collects information on program participation, use of services, and can help notify families of when their children are due to have a screening or referral visit.
- *Coordination with other programs.* NC Health Check coordinators also work closely with other agencies that may provide children with needed

services, such as Early Intervention programs, Head Start, Children's Special Health Services programs, and WIC.

APPLICATIONS	Families can file their Medicaid applications at the Department of Social Services, as well as some health departments, hospitals and migrant or community health centers or they can obtain a Medicaid application in the mail (See Medicaid chapter 7). Children do not fill out separate applications for NC Health Check services.
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	To receive NC Health Check Services, children must be under 21 years old and must meet the Medicaid eligibility requirements. NC Health Check services are available to all Medicaid-eligible children, regardless of the program category under which they qualify.
NUMBERS SERVED	More than 50% of the eligible children received at least one screening in Calendar Year 1996.
APPEAL RIGHTS	See Medicaid chapter.
FINANCING	See Medicaid chapter.
ADMINISTRATION	The NC Health Check program (EPSDT) is administered on the federal level by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) within the US Department of Health and Human Services. At the state level, the program is administered primarily by the NC Division of Medical Assistance within the NC Department of Health and Human Services. The Department of Social Services is responsible at the local level in determining Medicaid eligibility, and local health departments are primarily involved in NC Health Check coordination activities.
SOURCES OF LAW	Federal statute: 42 USC 1396 et. seq. Federal regulations: 42 CFR 430 et. seq. State statutes: NCGS 108A-54 et. seq. State regulations: 10 NCAC Chapters 26 and 50 State Medicaid policy manuals (available at every county DSS) State manual: Billing Guidance for NC Health Check Providers
FOR MORE INFORMATION	Division of Medical Assistance NC Department of Health and Human Services 1985 Umstead Dr. PO Box 29529 Raleigh, NC 27626-0529 (919) 857-4022 NC Family Health Resource Line: 1-800-367-2229. Services for the deaf and hard of hearing: 1-800-976-1922 (TTY).

DHHS has a toll-free number for Medicaid information and referral. Call CARELINE at 1-800-662-7030 (for patient information).

DHHS has a toll-free number for Medicaid information for providers: 1-800-688-6696 (through EDS).