

Medi-Cal Fast Facts

Enrollment

- Medi-Cal is the main source of health care coverage for nearly 6 million Californians (approximately 17 percent of the state's population). Children account for 52 percent Medi-Cal enrollees, parents comprise 25 percent, disabled individuals constitute 14 percent, and the elderly are 9 percent.
- Medi-Cal covers children ages 6 to 19 and their parents in families with incomes up to 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Children ages 1 to 5 are covered by Medi-Cal up to 133 percent of the FPL. The FPL, which varies by family size, is \$18,100 for a family of four.
- California ranks 15th among states in the proportion of its non-elderly population with incomes less than 200% FPL covered by Medicaid. California covers 28.5 percent of its low-income nonelderly population through Medi-Cal, compared to a national average of 26.4 percent.

Benefits

- Medi-Cal provide coverage for a core set of federally-required health care services, including doctor visits, hospital inpatient and outpatient care, and nursing home care.
- Medi-Cal also covers 32 of 34 optional categories of benefits, including dental and vision care for adults, outpatient prescription drugs, and home and community-based long-term health care for qualified low-income frail elderly. Only Wisconsin and Minnesota cover as many (or more) optional benefits through their Medicaid programs as California.

Spending

- In FY2001-02, state and federal spending for Medi-Cal totaled \$27.1 billion. (The federal government matches California's spending for Medi-Cal dollar-for-dollar). Medi-Cal is the second-largest component of the state general fund (\$9.8 billion in FY 2001-02); other state funding comes from tobacco settlement funds and intergovernmental transfers.
- Medi-Cal spending grew by an average of 6 percent per year between FY 1993-94 and FY 2001-02, from \$17.2 billion in FY 1993-94 to an estimated \$27.1 billion in FY 2001-02.
- California ranks last among state Medicaid programs in average spending per enrollee. In CY 1998, California spent an average of \$2,573 per enrollee compared to a national average of \$3,822 per enrollee.

Care Delivery

- Over half (53 percent) of Medi-Cal beneficiaries receive services through managed care. The remainder receive care through a fee-for-service system.
- Medi-Cal's physician payment rates rank 42nd out of 51 Medicaid programs in the country, and average only 65 percent of what Medicare pays for the same services. Nearly half of California physicians do not accept Medi-Cal patients.

For more information, read *The Medi-Cal Budget: Cost Drivers and Policy Considerations* (March 2002) or *Understanding Medi-Cal: The Basics* (September 2001). Both publications are available at www.medi-cal.org.

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