



5 Ways Primary Care Associations and Health Centers Can Help

Millions of children in the United States are uninsured, but are eligible for health coverage under Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Many of their parents and family members may be eligible for Medicaid, too.

Primary care associations and health centers are in a good position to find and enroll eligible children, since many children getting care from community health centers are likely to qualify for Medicaid or CHIP. Health centers that are Medicaid providers are reimbursed for the care they provide to enrolled patients. These funds can help health centers maintain quality care and enrich the health services they offer.

Community health centers may want to consider the following activities:

- 1. Make consumer-focused outreach materials available wherever patients and community members gather.** Posters, flyers, brochures, and videos can provide basic information about Medicaid, CHIP and coverage through a qualified health plan in the health insurance marketplace. Check out the outreach materials—and tips for using them effectively—at [InsureKidsNow.gov](https://www.insurekidsnow.gov), which can be customized with a local phone number or web address for free. Basic Medicaid fact sheets are also available at [Medicaid.gov](https://www.Medicaid.gov).
- 2. Incorporate application and renewal assistance into clinic operations.** Receptionists and other “point of entry” staff can steer families to health coverage information and application and renewal help. Health center staff can be trained to help individuals complete these procedures. Health centers can set up an online application station where families can apply online on their own. Make sure trained staff are available in case they need help.



[InsureKidsNow.gov](https://www.insurekidsnow.gov)

- 3. Partner with neighboring programs to conduct outreach and provide application and renewal assistance.** Health centers housed with other programs that serve families with eligible children can offer to provide information and application help to families using those services. For example, a Community Action Agency may sponsor the health center, as well as a WIC clinic or afterschool program. Community health centers may provide health education or screening programs at schools, housing authorities or other community sites. Include enrollment and renewal help as part of the menu of activities. This brief [video](#) shows a vibrant health center partnership in Rhode Island.
- 4. Devote time to outreach and enrollment when families are seeking health care.** Families often seek care for their children during asthma and allergy season, cold and flu season, and during Back-to-School time. Use these opportunities to emphasize services that are covered by Medicaid and CHIP, and also to explain that a covered child can get care whenever he or she may be sick or injured. Children can also get the preventive care they need to stay healthy and perform in school.
- 5. Tailor messages and assistance to the special populations health centers serve.** Provide information and assistance in the languages most likely to be spoken by patients and community members. Campaign materials are [available in Spanish and in several other languages](#). Community health centers may provide care for immigrants, migrant farm workers or people who are homeless. These individuals may need special help applying, for example, they may need help verifying information on their applications.