



## Who are the people impacted by this issue?

Wisconsin's Medicaid program provides important health and long-term supports and services to more than 1 million Wisconsinites. Nearly two-thirds of Wisconsin Medicaid participants are older adults, people with disabilities or children, many of whom have disabilities.

In Wisconsin, adults and children with disabilities may access the Medicaid program through more than 20 different programs with different names.

- Medicaid, including the BadgerCare program and Elderly Blind Disabled (EBD) Medicaid, provides access to acute and primary care and is vital to health care security.
- Many Wisconsinites with disabilities and older adults use a specialized long-term care program such as Family Care or IRIS to provide the support they need to stay in their home and participate in their community.
- Children with significant disabilities may access support through the Children's Long Term Support, Children's Community Options Program (CCOP), and mental health programs such as Comprehensive Community Services (CCS).
- Medicaid card services fund essential services like personal care which is help with things like bathing, dressing and eating. More than 15,000 people in Wisconsin use personal care annually.
- People with mental health needs and /or a substance use disorder may access services through Medicaid programs such as Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) and Community Support Program (CSP). Crisis services are also funded by Medicaid.
- These programs are administered by counties and tribes.

## Why is access to Medicaid important?

Medicaid is much more than basic health care for people with disabilities. It provides services that aren't covered by other types of insurance that are vital to the independence and health of people with disabilities.

Examples:

- Long term supports such as personal care services that provide assistance with bathing, toileting, and other basic needs; supportive home care, employment supports, meaningful community-based day activities, and more.
- In home therapy, home modifications, respite and other critical supports for children with significant disabilities and their families.



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- Psycho social rehab services such as employment support, daily living skills, peer support support recovery for people with mental health needs.
- Non Emergency Medical transportation (NEMT) to transport Medicaid members who need to get to and from medical services, but do not have transportation. Because so many Medicaid members are non-drivers, transportation to medical appointments is essential to ensure access to needed health care.

## What are major concerns related to this issue?

There is a shortage of professionals who accept Medicaid in some key specialty areas, including severe shortages of mental health and dental care providers. There is also a severe shortage of direct care workers, including those who provide personal care. Medicaid reimbursement rates are lower than commercial insurance. Targeted reimbursement rate increases can be important as part of a strategy to address access issues. New strategies are needed to recruit, train and retain physicians, nurses, therapists, direct care workers, peer specialists, employment specialists, and other staff who have the training and experience to support people with disabilities.

