Types of Health Care Assistance Programs, Part 1: CYSHCN and CHIP

Exploring government health care assistance options can be a daunting task. States and local governments run these programs, often under a variety of names and departments. And program eligibility requirements and health care services differ from state-to-state as well.

If you are just beginning to find out about government health care assistance programs, contact your county’s Office of Public Assistance or Social Services. A case worker will describe what programs are available, and the eligibility requirements and health care services offered for each one.

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)

Families of children with disabilities who don’t qualify for Medicaid and have little or no health insurance can obtain the following health care assistance through Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) programs:

- Health insurance
- Income
- Health and medical care

CYSHCN program eligibility is usually based on the child’s age and health condition, the family’s income, and place of residence. “Special needs” refers to serious and long lasting conditions such as these types of disabilities:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Developmental
- Behavioral
- Emotional

Examples of CYSHCN Program Services (each state’s program will be different)

- Assistive technology
- Case management
- Early intervention and screening for health risks
- Family support services
- Immunization
- Nutrition counseling
- Special education support services
To get more information about your state’s CYSHCN program:

Call your state’s Department of Public Health & Human Services, or your county’s Office of Public Assistance or Social Services. Each state or county may assign a unique name to its CYSHCN program.

Also contact the Family-to-Family Health Information Center in your state:

Family Voices, Inc
Call 1-888.835-5669
Visit www.FamilyVoices.org and click “State FV” to find the family center in your state
Write
2340 Alamo SE, Suite 102
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

This program, formerly known as State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), is designed to provide health insurance to children of families who cannot afford private insurance but whose incomes are modest enough that it exceeds Medicaid’s income limitations. The Children’s Health Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2009 authorized additional funding to help make CHIP available to more families.

CHIP’s Minimum Level of Medical Services Offered

Each state’s program differs, but all must offer at least these services:

- Routine check-ups
- Immunizations
- Dental and vision care
- Inpatient and outpatient hospital care
- Laboratory and X-ray services

To get more information about your state’s CHIP:

Call your state’s Department of Public Health & Human Services or your county’s Office of Public Assistance or Social Services.

Visit http://finder.healthcare.gov/ to locate your local office.

Speak with the nurse at your child’s school; in some states, you can apply for CHIP benefits through the public school system.