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# HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESS FOR IMMIGRANTS IN NEW YORK



American health care can be confusing,  
so it is not surprising  
if you feel lost in the system.

This brochure is a guide  
to **help** you understand  
eligibility requirements and  
your right to health care access.

## INTRODUCTION

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This brochure gives you information about access to health care and health care insurance in New York City. In addition, it addresses common concerns that you might have about health care access and insurance.

## ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

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If you have a medical emergency, you can get emergency care, including ambulance transportation, in New York State *regardless of your immigration status or ability to pay*. **Medical emergency** means that your medical condition is so severe, that without immediate medical attention, your health is at risk. If a medical worker decides that you have a medical emergency, the hospital must treat and stabilize you to make sure that you do not get worse when you leave the hospital.

Even if you do not have a medical emergency, you can still get health care. All New Yorkers without health insurance, including people who are undocumented, can receive health care from the following places:

- Community Health Centers (CHCs): federally funded clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC): public hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers, long-term care facilities, and clinics
- NYU Free Clinic

**At the places listed above, medical providers are not allowed to turn you away if you cannot pay for care.** Look at the end of this booklet for some contact information for these places.

# **PAYING FOR HEALTH CARE**

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Below is a partial list of insurance and payment options available in New York State. It lists telephone numbers for you to call and learn what the insurance plans and the choices mean and who can help you find what best fits your needs.

## **Medicaid**

- Eligibility depends upon immigration status, but does not depend upon how long you have been in the country
- You must meet income-level requirements, which depend on the size of your household
- Retroactive coverage available: you can receive services until your health plan becomes effective and then become reimbursed for your costs
- *Telephone:* 1-800-541-2831

## **Child Health Plus A (CHP A)**

- For children under the age of 19
- No monthly premium, no co-payments
- Covers physical exams, immunizations, emergency care, prescription and non-prescription drugs (if ordered), dental and vision care, x-ray and lab tests, and much more
- Eligibility depends on family income and size
- Retroactive coverage available: you can receive services until your health plan becomes effective and then become reimbursed for your costs
- *Telephone:* 1-800-698-4543

### **Child Health Plus B (CHP B)**

- For children under the age of 19, including undocumented immigrants, who are not able to get Medicaid or CHP A
- Monthly payment of \$0, \$9, or \$15 per child
- Eligibility depends on family income and size
- *Telephone:* 1-800-698-4543

### **Emergency Medicaid**

- Immigration is NOT a factor in getting this insurance
- Undocumented immigrants are eligible
- Completely covers emergency care

### **Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP)**

- Provides pregnancy care and other health services to women and teens, during pregnancy and until at least 2 months after delivery, and full health care coverage for the baby up to 1 year of age
- Your immigration status is NOT important; undocumented immigrants are eligible
- *Telephone:* 1-800-522-5006

### **Family Health Plus (FHP)**

- Adults, between ages of 19 and 64, with or without children
- Eligibility depends on your immigration status, family size, and income
- No monthly premiums and no co-payments when enrolled
- For individuals who cannot get Medicaid and are without insurance
- *Telephone:* 1-877-934-7587

### **Family Planning Benefit Program (FPBP)**

- Provides family planning services, such as birth control methods and counseling
- Eligibility depends upon your immigration status (documented), income levels, and fertility
- *Telephone: 212-965-7000*

### **HHC Options New York Health and Hospitals Corporation**

- If you do not qualify for FHP because of income-levels
- Immigration status is kept confidential
- Pay between \$15 and \$60 per visit at HHC hospitals, clinics, and other facilities, and up to \$40 per visit in pharmacy fees
- *Telephone: 311 (in New York City)*

### **AIDS Drugs Assistance Program (ADAP)**

- Must be a resident of New York State
- Undocumented immigrants are eligible
- People with HIV-infection and no symptoms are eligible
- Eligibility depends on family size and income
- Free medications is provided for the treatment of HIV/AIDS and opportunistic infections
- *Telephone: 1-800-542-2437*

## **AIDS Drugs Assistance Program Plus (ADAP Plus)**

- Must be a New York State resident
- Undocumented immigrants are eligible
- People with HIV-infection and no symptoms are eligible
- Eligibility depends on family size and income
- Provides free primary care services at selected clinics, hospital outpatient departments, office based physicians and lab vendors
- The services include ambulatory care for medical evaluation, early intervention, and ongoing treatment
- *Telephone: 1-800-542-2437*

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## **COMMON CONCERNS FOR UNINSURED IMMIGRANTS**

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***Will the emergency room report me to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)?***

No.

***I am an undocumented adult without insurance. Can I get any medical care?***

Yes, you can get medical care. You can go to Health and Hospital Corporation (HHC) or Neighborhood Family Community Health Centers (NFHCC) for “sliding fee scale.” A sliding fee scale means that you can pay what you can afford.

***What should I tell people at the hospital about my immigration status?***

You do not have to tell them your immigration status to receive care. You can say that you do not think you are eligible for Medicaid.

***When I go to a hospital, I am asked for a social security number. What if I do not have one?***

The hospital is deciding whether or not you can get public insurance. You should not be turned away, even if you do not have a social security number. Tell them that you would like to talk with someone about payment options.

***If I decide to become legal (or become a citizen, or get work authorization), will I have to pay back the cost of Medicaid to prevent being considered a public charge?***

No. You only have to pay back public health insurance costs if you gave false information or false documents when you applied for coverage.

***Are health care benefits considered “public charge”?***

No. “Public charge” means a person who depends on the government for cash public assistance or long-term care. This does not include health care benefits. However, if you use long-term nursing, you can be considered a public charge. If you are HIV+ when entering the U.S., you must use the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) or ADAP Plus (the Primary Care plan).

***Are there laws that protect the rights of people who need emergency care?***

Everyone is entitled to emergency care, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

**If you have a question about access to health care and insurance, or feel that your rights have been violated, contact the Legal Aid Society at (212) 577-3575.**

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

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HHC facilities and community health centers are in all five boroughs of New York City: Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

For information about HHC health care facilities or centers near you, **call 311**. You can also find more information at the following website: <http://www.nyc.gov/hhc>.



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