

HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN - INCOME ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

North Dakota children not covered by private health insurance may be eligible for medical coverage through one of the following programs:

- **Medicaid**, which provides coverage for various groups, including children through age 18 with family incomes up to 100 percent of the federal poverty level. As of November 2001, 20,829 North Dakota children were enrolled in the Medicaid program.
- **Healthy Steps**, which provides coverage for children through age 18 who are not eligible for Medicaid and who have family incomes up to 140 percent of the federal poverty level. As of November 2001, 2,615 North Dakota children were enrolled in the Healthy Steps program.
- **Caring Program**, which provides primary and preventive health care for uninsured children through age 18 with family incomes from 141 to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. As of November 2001, 539 children were enrolled in the Caring Program.

MEDICAID

Pregnant women and children under age 6 with **family net income up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level** are eligible for Medicaid program coverage. Older children, those ages 6 through 18, with **family net income up to 100 percent of the federal poverty level** are also eligible for Medicaid. In determining family net income, establishing eligibility, and determining recipient liability, all family income must be considered, except for those types of income which, pursuant to North Dakota Administrative Code (NDAC) Section 75-02-02.1-36, must be disregarded. The types of **income which must be disregarded** in determining Medicaid eligibility include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Payments made by the Department of Human Services for foster care or subsidized adoption.
- Occasional small gifts.
- County general assistance issued intermittently for emergency situations.
- Housing allowances, rent supplements, or utility payments provided through the housing assistance program of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Income of an individual who lives in the parental home but is not part of the Medicaid unit.

- Educational loans, scholarships, grants, awards, and work study income received by an undergraduate student.
- In-kind income, except in-kind income received in lieu of wages.
- Benefits received through the low-income home energy assistance program.
- Training funds received from vocational rehabilitation.
- Training allowances up to \$30 per week provided through the tribal work experience, basic employment skills training, or job search programs.
- Income tax refunds and earned income credits.
- Needs-based payments, support services, and relocation expenses provided through programs established under the Job Training Partnership Act and through the job opportunities and basic skills program.
- Income earned by a child if the child is a full-time student or a part-time student employed less than 100 hours per month.
- Payments from the family subsidy program.
- The first \$50 per month of current child support received on behalf of children in the Medicaid unit.
- Loan proceeds if subject to a written agreement requiring repayment by the recipient.
- Crime Victims Reparation Act payments.
- Assistance received due to a presidentially declared disaster.

Gross income includes earned income, unearned income received as a fixed amount each month, and unearned income received in a lump sum. Earned income is determined by adding monthly net income from self-employment to other earned income and subtracting the applicable deductions. Income deductions to earned and unearned income, which are defined in NDAC Section 75-02-02.1-39, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The cost of health insurance premiums.
- Medical expenses for necessary medical or remedial care.
- Court-ordered child and spousal support payments actually paid by a member of the Medicaid unit on behalf of a person who is not a member of the Medicaid unit.
- The cost of premiums for nursing insurance.
- Reasonable child care expenses.

- A work or training allowance of \$30 per week for each individual in the Medicaid unit who is employed or in training.
- Transportation expenses necessary to secure medical care for a member of the Medicaid unit.
- The cost of remedial care for an individual residing in a specialized facility.
- Mandatory retirement plan deductions.
- Union dues.

HEALTHY STEPS

The Department of Human Services contracts with Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota to provide coverage for the Healthy Steps program. Coverage is based on the state employee group health insurance plan, with added coverage for dental and vision services. Children through age 18 with **family net income up to 140 percent of the federal poverty level** are eligible if the children are not eligible for Medicaid. Family net income is determined by subtracting from gross household income the following:

1. Payroll taxes and other mandatory deductions.
2. Qualifying day care expenses if necessary to engage in employment or training.
3. Court-ordered child and spousal support payments if actually paid by a parent on behalf

of an individual who is not a member of the household.

CARING PROGRAM

The North Dakota Caring Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, was established in 1989 by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota in order to provide basic health and dental services to North Dakota children from low-income families who cannot afford private health insurance but do not qualify for Medicaid or Healthy Steps. Funded through contributions from businesses, community and church groups, and individuals, the Caring Program provides health and dental benefits to eligible children at no cost to their families. Children through age 18 with **family gross income from 141 to 200 percent of the federal poverty level** are eligible if the children are not covered under private health insurance, Medicaid, or Healthy Steps. Because the lower limit for eligibility for the Caring Program is based on **gross income** before deductions at 141 percent of the federal poverty level and the upper limit for Healthy Steps is based on **net income** after deductions at 140 percent, there may be some overlap in coverage between the two programs.