

Advancing High-Quality, Equitable Health Care in North Carolina Medicaid Community Brief

The [Duke-Margolis Institute for Health Policy](#) is supporting the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' goals to advance health equity for the millions of North Carolinians who are eligible for health care through Medicaid. In our work, health equity means ensuring that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to receive high-quality health care, especially North Carolinians from communities that have been systemically excluded from the health system.

The goal of this work is to ensure Medicaid-eligible North Carolinians can receive high-quality, equitable care through **NC Medicaid Managed Care**, a state program that began in 2021. Through NC Medicaid Managed Care, most people insured by Medicaid receive benefits from one of five health insurance companies: AmeriHealth Caritas, Carolina Complete Health, Healthy Blue, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, or WellCare.

NC Medicaid Managed Care aims to improve the way health care is delivered to make sure all people receive the right care at the right time. North Carolina's vision for high-quality care through NC Medicaid Managed Care includes three main goals:

- 1) better care delivery
- 2) healthier people, healthier communities
- 3) smarter health care spending

As one key tool to help reach these goals, NC Medicaid Managed Care aims to change how health care providers are paid, by increasing "**value-based payment**" arrangements. Through a value-based payment approach, health plans and providers are paid based on the quality of care they provide to patients, rather than the number of health care services they provide. With this new way to pay for health care, patients, families, and community members have an opportunity to redefine what high-quality care means to them and what they value in health care.

Duke-Margolis is a non-profit, university institute of researchers, health care providers, and public health experts who are committed to improving health, health care, and health equity in North Carolina. Duke-Margolis is collaborating with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, along with many others around the state, to ensure that NC Medicaid Managed Care provides high-quality, equitable care to eligible North Carolinians.

About this Project

In this [project](#), Duke-Margolis seeks to identify strategies and provide recommendations to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services on ways to advance health equity in NC Medicaid Managed Care. Through this effort, we will engage with organizations serving diverse communities across the state to collect feedback about NC Medicaid Managed Care and its value-based payment approach. Community members' input and concerns will directly inform our recommendations to address barriers to accessing and receiving high-quality health care, especially for people who experience discrimination and systemic exclusion from the health system.

Community Engagement is Key

Community engagement and feedback about NC Medicaid Managed Care is vital to improving the program. To that end, this project provides an important opportunity for North Carolinians to help shape how their health care is managed and delivered. Specifically, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services seeks guidance from community leaders and members on how best to ensure that people have equitable access to high-quality care, and ensure that health care providers are rewarded for providing that care to all people.

We will engage organizations serving diverse communities, Medicaid-eligible North Carolinians, caregivers, and others through interviews, meetings, and focus groups to hear their ideas and feedback on how to prioritize health equity in the design of NC Medicaid Managed Care. Researchers at Duke-Margolis will also use community members' feedback to analyze NC Medicaid claims data -- the information health care providers submit for payment -- to directly inform our recommendations for NC Medicaid's approach to value-based payment.

Why this Work Matters

This work gives Medicaid-eligible North Carolinians and their communities the opportunity to share their lived experiences and play a role in shaping how their health care is managed and delivered.

Your feedback and guidance will inform our recommendations to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services on how to best improve health care, health equity, and health outcomes for North Carolinians through the NC Medicaid Managed Care program.

For More Information:

Rebecca Whitaker, PhD, MSPH

Research Director, North Carolina Health Care Transformation
Duke-Margolis Institute for Health Policy
rebecca.whitaker@duke.edu

Sara Debab

Policy Research Assistant, Health Care Transformation
Duke-Margolis Institute for Health Policy
sara.debab@duke.edu

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