FACT SHEET

Prioritizing Community Voices to Enhance Medicaid Policy and Program Design

Duke
MARGOLIS INSTITUTE *for* Health Policy

Background

North Carolina Medicaid has a new approach to improve how health care is being provided and paid for **(Box 1).** These approaches aim to accomplish three goals: **1. better health care delivery, 2. healthier people and communities, and 3. smarter health care spending.** With this shift, community members have an opportunity to define what high quality care means to them and their families.

With support form the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the Duke-Margolis Institute for Health Policy is working with community members and North Carolina Medicaid to better address the health needs of Medicaid members and their families. We held six conversations with groups of community members from across North Carolina to understand what they need to be healthy and hear their suggestions for improving Medicaid services.

Challenges Shared by Community Members

- Not enough providers accept Medicaid in their area
- Long wait times and traveling long distances make it difficult to see a provider
- Policies that can make it harder to get prescriptions and other health care services
- Lack of quality and reliable Medicaid-provided transportation to appointments, also known as non-emergency medical transportation
- Confusing application process, eligibility requirements, grievance processes and patients' rights and responsibilities
- Experiences of bias and discrimination from providers and staff when using health care services
- Needing more support with things outside of a doctor's office that impact health, such as affordable housing and healthy foods
- Feeling stressed about finding and accessing everything needed for themselves and their families to be healthy

BOX 1

NC Medicaid Managed Care

Most North Carolinians receive their Medicaid benefits through this program. People enrolled in Managed Care Plans get medical and behavioral health care through a group of doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers. You can learn more about NC Medicaid Managed Care here or through this video.

People enrolled in Standard Plans (Healthy Blue, AmeriHealth Caritas, UnitedHealthcare, WellCare, and Carolina Complete), Tailored Plans (Alliance Health, Partners Health Management, Trillium, and Vaya) and the EBCI Tribal option are all in Medicaid Managed Care.

NC Medicaid Managed Care is moving toward value-based payment, which is a new way to pay health care providers. In value-based payment, providers are paid for the quality of care they provide, rather than the number of services they provide. This shift provides new opportunities to address existing health care challenges, such as getting access to providers when you need to see them.

Supported by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

Next Steps

Duke-Margolis is incorporating the challenges and recommendations gathered from community members into policy options for state Medicaid agencies to consider. A few examples of how we are using community members' feedback to identify policy changes are listed below. Check back on our project page in summer 2025 for a full summary of feedback.

Community Member Recommendation	What is Currently Available in North Carolina?	How can North Carolina Build on Available Resources?
Offer more support to help community members find and access the services and resources they need	Medicaid members have access to care management services either through their health plan or another provider (called an Advanced Medical Home or Tailored Care Manager).	Provide additional care management and support to members with complex health and social needs
Provide more support with non-medical factors that impact health, such as affordable housing and healthy foods	The *Healthy Opportunities Pilots* (HOP) has covered some services related to housing, transportation, and food in certain NC counties. You can learn more about HOP here and here, or you can reach out to the service number on your Medicaid ID card for more information from your Plan.	Explore additional opportunities for Medicaid to help with unmet needs

Further Opportunities for NC Medicaid Beneficiary Feedback

NC Medicaid beneficiaries can help shape the future of NC Medicaid in 2025 and beyond. Medicaid is creating a Beneficiary Advisory Council and, as of Winter 2024/2025, accepted its first round of applications for people within Medicaid and their caretakers (paid or unpaid) to participate. While applications have closed for this round of selection, you can apply to participate for future consideration on the Beneficiary Advisory Council here. Medicaid health plans are also required to have Member Advisory Committees. You can find out more about your Plan's Member Advisory Committee on their website.