
UNDERSTANDING HEALTH INSURANCE

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Having consistent health insurance coverage is an important part of transitioning to adult health care. Health insurance helps pay for appointments, medications, hospital care, and special health equipment. Health insurance is also important when you are NOT sick. Screenings, immunizations, and mental health care can help you stay healthy as you get older.

Health Insurance Definitions

- **Co-Insurance:** The patient or policyholder's share of the costs of a covered health care service. It is a percent of the amount the insurance company allows for the service. You pay the co-insurance plus any deductible you owe.
- **Co-Pay/Co-Payment:** The amount you might have to pay for a covered service. This is often paid at the appointment.
- **Deductible:** The amount you owe for health care services before your insurance pays. For example, if your deductible is \$1,000, your insurance company won't pay anything except for preventative care until you meet the \$1,000 deductible.
- **Premium:** The amount that must be paid for your health insurance. You, your employer, and/or the policyholder pays this amount monthly, every few months, or yearly.
- **Network:** The clinics, doctors, and suppliers your health insurance company has agreements with to provide health care services. Ask your insurance company which providers are in-network. If a provider is out-of-network, it might cost more for you to see them.

Helpful Tips:

- If possible, have your parent/caregiver help you understand your insurance coverage and what the terms mean.
- Start thinking about what insurance you might qualify for when you turn 18. The type of insurance you get may greatly depend on your health care needs and the government programs you qualify for.
- Ask your insurance company for:
 - The costs of seeing a provider in-network and out-of-network
 - The costs of medications under this specific insurance policy
 - The limit on the number of visits for certain services (such as physical therapy or home health care) and any rules for getting approval to see a specialist or go to the hospital
- If you currently have Medicaid, you must reapply as an adult about 3 weeks before you turn 19.