



Recent Improvements to Medicaid Vaccine Access

The health and economic benefits of childhood vaccines are well-known and documented. However, vaccines remain important throughout one's life, especially for older adults and the chronically ill.

Every year, thousands of adults die and thousands more suffer serious health problems from vaccine-preventable diseases—due in part to the complicated and costly coverage landscape for vaccines under Medicare and Medicaid.

Despite the well-known benefits of immunizations, three out of four adults are missing one or more of four critical vaccines for flu, pneumococcal, shingles, Td or Tdap and only 20% of adults have received all recommended vaccines. Low adult immunization rates not only impact unvaccinated individuals but also have health and economic repercussions for families and entire communities.

Barriers to adult immunization, such as the inability to pay due to co-pays and gaps in coverage, have contributed to low vaccination rates.

Gaps in vaccine coverage have hindered our nation's disease prevention efforts and put millions of Americans needlessly at risk of becoming sick or dying from vaccine-preventable diseases. Thankfully, state Medicaid programs are beginning to implement new policies to expand vaccine access for millions of low-income adults by eliminating cost sharing and covering all Advisory Committee on Immunization

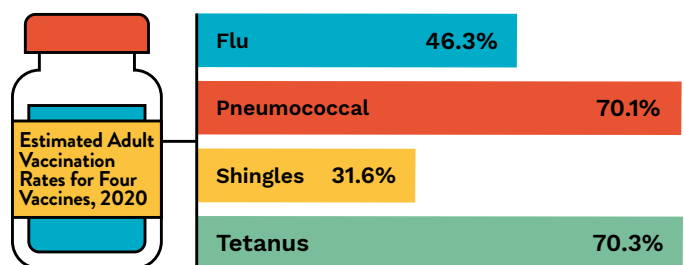
Practices (ACIP)-recommended vaccines under Medicaid.



Free Vaccines in Medicaid

Vaccines are essential across the life course but are especially important for young children, pregnant women and older adults. Unvaccinated adults can unknowingly spread vaccine-preventable diseases to children who are too young to be immunized or to immunocompromised persons. Pregnant women can also suffer serious health complications from vaccine preventable illness, yet nearly 60% do not receive all recommended vaccines to protect themselves and their infants.¹

According to 2021 Avalere data, 19 states imposed cost sharing or did not cover all Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-recommended vaccines. Beginning October 1, 2023, all Medicaid-enrolled adults will have access to ACIP-recommended vaccines at no cost.² This policy change will greatly improve access and utilization and make vaccine coverage consistent with private insurance plans, the U.S. military and Medicare.



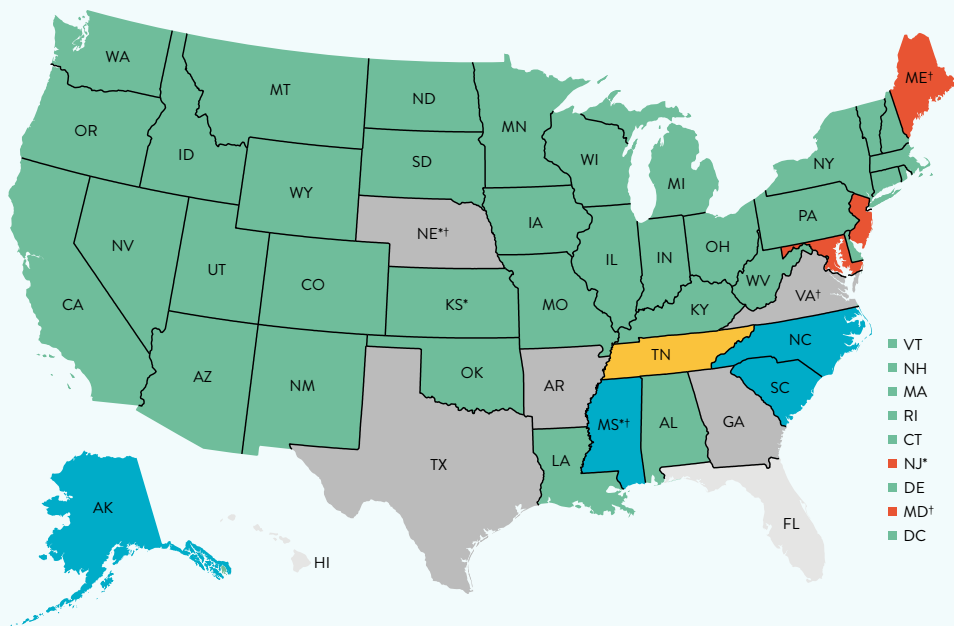
Source: GAO analysis of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance system Data. | GAO-22-105334

1 https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6939a2.htm#T1_down

2 Public Law No: 117-169 Section 11401

Avalere study on current Medicaid vaccine coverage gaps

- All Assessed Vaccines Covered for All Populations (35 States)
- 3+ Assessed Vaccines Not Covered (2 States)
- Unable to Determine All Assessed Vaccines (3 States)
- 1 Assessed Vaccine Not Covered (4 States)
- 2 Assessed Vaccines Not Covered (5 States)
- State Does Not Have Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS) (1 State)



*FFS programs contain less than 2% of state Medicaid beneficiaries; most Medicaid beneficiaries in these states are enrolled in a MMC plan.

†Avalere was unable to determine if a coverage policy aligned with ACIP recommendation for one or more assessed vaccines

Improving the Landscape for Vaccine Access

State implementation of vaccine coverage for traditional adult Medicaid populations comes during a critical time. With the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, Medicaid redeterminations will potentially result in millions of individuals consequently losing access to this important coverage.

With expanded Medicaid vaccine coverage, additional challenges to access for these patients must also be addressed. Providers across the health care system continue to face burdens when it comes to purchasing, storing, administering and billing for vaccines under Medicaid. Insufficient data on vaccine coverage gaps also hinders efforts to improve access to rural and medically underserved populations.

AVAC RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING POLICY CHANGES:

Ensure that states provide adequate reimbursement for the cost of vaccine supplies as well as the time providers spend with patients for vaccine counseling and administration will go a long way toward an efficient, robust and cost saving immunization system for those with Medicaid coverage.

Enhance Medicaid vaccine data quality and completeness, including improvements to interoperability between Medicaid Management Information Systems (MMIS) and electronic health records.

Support funding to engage community-based organizations and partners to support efforts around beneficiary outreach, awareness and support programs that facilitate access to vaccination.

About AVAC

The Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC) is a diverse group of health care providers, vaccine innovators, pharmacies, public health organizations and patient and consumer groups. AVAC's mission is to raise awareness, improve access and increase utilization of vaccines among adults. Near universal access to immunizations for children has been one of the greatest public health accomplishments of the 20th century. AVAC seeks to achieve the same level of success for adult immunization.