

Your Child's Health Care and the Affordable Care Act (ACA):

Health Home Programs and Coordinated Care

Do you have a child with a chronic (long-term) medical or mental health problem? Does your child have Medicaid? If you answered yes to both of these questions, you need to know:

Under the ACA, your child may be able to get extra care coordination and support services from your doctor through a Health Home program in your state.

What is care coordination?

Care coordination helps people who need a lot of medical services get the best care possible. When care is coordinated, it means that the families, doctors, and other providers involved in a person's health care work together as a team.

How can care coordination help my child?


Usually, children who need a lot of health care services have a chronic health problem — these can include behavioral or mental health issues. Your child may get care from different kinds of providers in different places, like hospitals or doctors' offices. This can make it difficult for you and the different providers to keep track of all the details about your child's care. It can also cause confusion. For example, 2 different doctors might do the same test because they didn't know the other had already done it.

When doctors and other providers use a coordinated care approach, they talk with each other often, sharing information about your child's care — and that means better care for your child.

What is the Affordable Care Act (ACA)?

The ACA is the federal health care reform law signed into law in 2010. (Some people call the law Obamacare.) Most people know that the ACA is about health insurance, but the law also includes many ways to improve health care in the United States.





Keep in mind that you're an important part of your child's care coordination team. Make sure you're a part of making decisions about your child's care.

What changed under the ACA?

Since the ACA became law, more doctors and health care providers get paid to talk to each other about their patients. **The law allows states to set up a program that pays health care providers to coordinate care for people with chronic illnesses enrolled in Medicaid.** This part of the ACA is called Health Homes (or Section 2703).

A few other things to know about state Health Home programs:

- States can choose to start a Medicaid Health Home program, but they don't have to.
- Health Home programs can be different from state to state. Some states might choose to have a Health Home program for one specific condition — for example, a state could choose to create a program only for people with HIV/AIDS.
- Health Home programs may also provide patient and family support services, like respite care (short-term child care services), extra help when your child comes home from the hospital, and health education.

How do I know if my child can get coordinated care where we live?

In general, children and youth with Medicaid will qualify for Health Home services if they have:

- 2 chronic conditions
- 1 chronic condition and the risk of developing another one
- A serious mental illness

To find out if your state has a Section 2703 Health Home program:

- Contact your state's Medicaid program member services department
- Go to <http://www.medicaid.gov> and search for "states with health homes"

Where can I get more information?

To learn more about talking with your doctor about making decisions together for your child, go to www.familyvoices.org

You can find more information about caring for children and youth with special health care needs at www.medicalhomeinfo.org

You can find more information about health insurance for children and youth with special health care needs at www.catalystctr.org



Developed by the National Center for Medical Home Implementation at the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Catalyst Center at the Boston University School of Public Health through cooperative agreements (U43MC09134; U41MC13618) with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

