

# EMERGENCY MEDICAID FOR IMMIGRANTS



This brochure was produced by South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center. This brochure is for information only. If you have problems with Emergency Medicaid, you may want to contact your local legal services program by calling Legal Aid Telephone Intake Service for referral at (803) 744-9430 in Columbia or toll-free at (888) 346-5592 from other places in the state.

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center is dedicated to advocacy for low-income people in South Carolina to effect systemic change by acting in or through the courts, legislature, administrative agencies, community and the media, and helping others do the same through education, training, and co-counseling.

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*This fact sheet only applies to immigrants who are not eligible for regular Medicaid. These immigrants may be eligible for Emergency Medicaid.*

## 1. WHAT IS EMERGENCY MEDICAID?

Emergency Medicaid is a special kind of Medicaid that will pay the full cost of emergency room services.

Medicaid is a program that pays the full cost of health care for some low-income people. To get Medicaid, you must be a qualified immigrant. To find out if you are a qualified immigrant, look at this chart:

<b>If you came to the U.S. before August 22, 1996, you can get Medicaid if you are a:</b>	<b>If you came to the U.S. after August 22, 1996, you can get Medicaid if you</b>
Green card holder	Green card holder with 40 quarters of work (about 10 years of working)
Abused immigrant, your children, and your parents	An immigrant who has lived in the U.S. for 5 years as a qualified immigrant. If you have had a green card for 5 years, you can get Medicaid
	Member of the military or a veteran
All refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitians, and conditional entrants can get Medicaid for their first seven years in the U.S. They cannot get Medicaid after that.	

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Many immigrants who cannot get regular Medicaid may still be able to get Emergency Medicaid. Emergency Medicaid is only for immigrants, and it will only pay for very serious emergencies. **You can get Emergency Medicaid even if you are undocumented.**

## **2. CAN I GET EMERGENCY MEDICAID?**

If you cannot get regular Medicaid because you are not a qualified immigrant, you may still be able to get Emergency Medicaid. You can be undocumented and get Emergency Medicaid. To get Emergency Medicaid, you must:

- Have a very low income and fit into one of these groups:
  - Pregnant;
  - Age 65 or older;
  - Disabled;
  - Under age 19; or
  - A relative who lives with a child under age 18 and who takes care of that child.
- Be a resident of South Carolina (be able to prove you live in this state). One way to prove you live here is by showing you have paid rent in South Carolina.

## **3. WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DOES EMERGENCY MEDICAID COVER?**

Emergency Medicaid only covers very serious emergencies that put your health or body in lots of danger. The Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) decides if an emergency is serious enough to be covered by Emergency Medicaid.

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For example, labor and delivery of a baby would be covered by Emergency Medicaid, but the mother's care before the baby is born would not. A heart attack or stroke would probably be covered, but a black eye or a broken ankle would probably not be covered.

Emergency Medicaid does not cover organ transplants.

## **4. HOW DO I APPLY FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAID?**

A lot of hospitals in South Carolina will help you apply for Emergency Medicaid. If you do not have health insurance, a hospital employee will help find out if you can get Emergency Medicaid. This hospital employee will set up a meeting for you to meet with a DHHS caseworker. When you go to this meeting, the DHHS caseworker will fill out the application with you.

If you need an interpreter (someone who speaks your language) or need to have the application translated into your language, you should ask the hospital and DHHS to help you with that.

Even if the hospital does not tell you about Emergency Medicaid, you should ask if you can get Emergency Medicaid. You can also take all your hospital paperwork to your local DHHS office and apply on your own. You can even apply for Emergency Medicaid after you have gone to the emergency room.

## **5. WILL THE HOSPITAL OR DHHS ASK ME QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING AN IMMIGRANT WHEN I APPLY?**

No. Because Emergency Medicaid is for immigrants, the hospital and DHHS do not need to ask questions about your status or your Social Security number. This means you do not have to tell anyone about your status or Social Security Number when you apply for Emergency Medicaid.