

Changes coming to Medicaid

What is happening?

A new federal law is changing who can get Medicaid and what people must do to keep their coverage. In Washington State, Medicaid is called Apple Health.

The law, called H.R. 1 or the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, makes big cuts to federal health care programs. It changes Medicaid, the ACA marketplace, and Medicare. Because of these cuts, many people could lose coverage, and hospitals may get less money back for the care they provide.

Who is affected?

Three groups of people on Apple Health will be impacted:

- Legal non-citizens
- People eligible for Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act expansion
- People in traditional Medicaid/Apple Health

When will these changes happen?

The new Medicaid rules will be put in place over the next two years.

Most major changes will start in October 2026. The timeline on the right has more details

What can we do?

Over the next year, hospitals will work with the state and health care partners to help people understand these changes and support them in meeting the requirements to keep Medicaid coverage. People who lose Medicaid coverage are likely to qualify for charity care from the hospital under Washington State law.

Learn more: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/programs-and-initiatives/apple-health-medicaid/hr-1-impacts>

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Restrictions for immigrants

Oct.
2026

Only certain legal non-citizens can get Medicaid, including:

- Green card holders
- Some Cuban-Haitian entrants
- Compact of Free Association citizens

Work requirements & Less retroactive coverage

Jan
2027

Some people in the Medicaid Expansion group will need to prove that they are doing one of the following for 80 hours each month:

- Working
- Going to school
- Doing community service

Medicaid will pay for fewer past medical services:

- Expansion members: Medicaid can cover care from the past 1 month
- Traditional Medicaid members: Medicaid can cover care from the past 2 months

This is a change from the previous 90-day period.

More frequent eligibility checks

Oct.
2027

State eligibility reviews will move from annual to at least once every six months for Apple Health for Adults (Medicaid expansion population.)