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ForwardHealth UPDATE

Wisconsin serving you

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UPCOMING CHANGES FOR NONCITIZEN MEMBER ELIGIBILITY

Beginning October 1, 2026, certain noncitizen adults will no longer be eligible for Wisconsin Medicaid due to Section 71109 of the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Federal changes limit adult eligibility for health care to U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, lawful permanent residents, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and Compact of Free Association citizens. Adult applicants and existing members with newly nonqualifying immigration statuses will not have access to health care coverage through Wisconsin Medicaid.

Providers should always verify a member's eligibility before delivering services to avoid denied claims.

Newly Nonqualifying Immigration Statuses

Starting October 1, 2026, noncitizen adults age 19 and older with one of these legal immigration statuses are no longer eligible for Wisconsin Medicaid:

- Amerasian
- Asylee

AFFECTED PROGRAMS

BadgerCare Plus, BadgerCare Plus HMOs, Medicaid, SeniorCare, SSI HMOs

TO

All Providers, HMOs and Other Managed Care Programs

QUICK LINKS

- Retroactive Enrollment topic #280
- BadgerCare Plus Prenatal Program topic #785
- Non-U.S. Citizens—Emergency Services topic #277

The information provided in this ForwardHealth Update is published in accordance with Section 71109 of H.R.1 (2025).

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT of HEALTH SERVICES

- Conditional entrant
- Foreign-born member of a Tribal nation
- Person granted withholding of removal
- Person paroled for at least one year
- Refugee or special immigrant
- Trafficking victim or their family
- Violence Against Women Act self-petitioner

The new noncitizen eligibility criteria apply to:

- New Wisconsin Medicaid applications on and after October 1, 2026.
- Current Wisconsin Medicaid members as of October 1, 2026.

Exceptions

Certain individuals will remain eligible for Wisconsin Medicaid, even if they have a newly nonqualifying immigration status listed previously. Those individuals are:

- Lawfully present children younger than 19 years old.
- Lawfully present pregnant people.
- Lawfully present young adults under 21 years old who live in an Institution for Mental Diseases.

Nonimpacted Immigration Statuses

Noncitizen adults age 19 and older with one of these statuses remain eligible for Wisconsin Medicaid:

- Lawful permanent resident
- Compact of Free Association migrant
- Cuban-Haitian entrant

Backdated Eligibility

Adult noncitizens with newly nonqualifying immigration statuses may apply for backdated coverage for the months preceding October 2026. Refer to the ForwardHealth Online Handbook Retroactive Enrollment topic #280 for more information on backdated coverage.

For example: Mira, a 25-year-old refugee, applies for Wisconsin Medicaid on November 15, 2026. She meets all eligibility criteria for a Wisconsin Medicaid program, BadgerCare Plus, except she does not have a qualifying immigration status. Mira requests retroactive coverage for the past months of August, September, and October. Due to her refugee status, she is not eligible

REMINDER

Providers should always verify a member's eligibility before delivering services to avoid denied claims.

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for BadgerCare Plus starting October 1, but she is eligible for August and September.

BadgerCare Plus Prenatal Program

There is no change to eligibility for the BadgerCare Plus Prenatal Program. Refer to the BadgerCare Plus Prenatal Program topic #785 for more information.

Emergency Services

There is no change to eligibility for emergency services as defined by Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 101.03(52). Noncitizens who no longer qualify for Wisconsin Medicaid can apply for emergency services if they have a medical emergency. Refer to the Non-U.S. Citizens—Emergency Services topic #277 for more information.

Assisting Members

Helping members navigate these eligibility changes is vital to maintaining health care access. Providers are asked to remind Medicaid members to tell their local agency if their immigration status changes, particularly if they become a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident or if they are pregnant. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries also need to report changes in their immigration status to their local Social Security office.

To help members who receive SSI, are pregnant, or recently became a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident maintain their coverage, providers should encourage members to report these changes immediately to both:

- The Social Security Administration
- The agency administering their Medicaid eligibility

Resources

Providers can use these resources to help support members:

- The Medicaid: Health Care Coverage for Noncitizens page of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) website
- The May 2026 partner webinar recording or slides (PDF) on the federally required changes to eligibility for non-U.S. citizens

RESOURCES

Medicaid: Health Care Coverage for Noncitizens page

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Contact Information

For additional questions, providers can call Provider Services at 800-947-9627. Representatives are available Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–6 p.m. Central Time.

For questions regarding the changes to the eligibility criteria, providers can email DHSForwardHealthPartners@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Documentation Retention

As a reminder, providers must follow the documentation retention requirements per Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 106.02(9). Providers are required to produce or submit documentation, or both, to DHS upon request. Per Wis. Stat. § 49.45(3)(f), providers of services shall maintain records as required by DHS for verification of provider claims for reimbursement. DHS may audit such records to verify the actual provision of services and the appropriateness and accuracy of claims. DHS may deny or recoup payment for services that fail to meet these requirements. Refusal to produce documentation may result in denial of submitted claims, recoupment of paid claims, application of intermediate sanctions, or termination from the Medicaid program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Provider Services,
800-947-9627

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The ForwardHealth Update is the first source of program policy and billing information for providers.

Wisconsin Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus, SeniorCare, and Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program are administered by the Division of Medicaid Services within the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). The Wisconsin HIV Drug Assistance Program and the Wisconsin Well Woman Program are administered by the Division of Public Health within DHS.

For questions, call Provider Services at 800-947-9627 or visit our website at www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/.