

Fact Sheet

NC Medicaid Ombudsman Overview

County Playbook: NC Medicaid Managed Care

What is the NC Medicaid Ombudsman?

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) has contracted with the NC Medicaid Ombudsman to provide services to North Carolina Medicaid and NC Health Choice beneficiaries. The NC Medicaid Ombudsman provides free confidential support and education about beneficiary rights and responsibilities under NC Medicaid. The NC Medicaid Ombudsman offers help if beneficiaries have trouble getting access to health care and connects people to resources like social services, housing resources, food assistance, legal aid and other programs.

The NC Medicaid NC Ombudsman supports access to care by making referrals to and collaborating with other resources including state agencies, NCDHHS partners, community-based advocacy groups and legal service organizations. They identify trends or systemic issues in NC Medicaid Managed Care performance and support NCDHHS' vision of creating a healthier North Carolina.

NC MEDICAID OMBUDSMAN BENEFICIARY RESOURCES

The NC Medicaid Ombudsman performs outreach to beneficiaries and/or their authorized representatives and is accessible in multiple, integrated ways, utilizing a “no wrong door” approach for providing information about NC Medicaid and NC Medicaid Managed Care.

- **WEBSITE** provides member-focused educational materials regarding NC Medicaid Managed Care. For more information visit, ncmedicaidombudsman.org.
- **CALL CENTER** is open five days a week and can accommodate after-hour calls through messaging systems. To reach the NC Medicaid Ombudsman, call **877-201-3750** from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for State holidays.
- **OUTREACH EVENTS** hosted independently by the NC Medicaid Ombudsman as well as joint events with the health plans and the NC Medicaid Enrollment Broker.

WHEN SHOULD BENEFICIARIES CALL THE NC MEDICAID OMBUDSMAN?

Beneficiaries should call the NC Medicaid Ombudsman when:

- They are not getting the care they need.
- They have questions about a notice or bill they have received.



- They have already talked with their health care provider or health plan and have not been able to solve the problem.
- They have questions about the complaint or appeal process.

NC MEDICAID OMBUDSMAN KEY SERVICES

The NC Medicaid Ombudsman provides education and advocacy to Medicaid beneficiaries whether they are in NC Medicaid Managed Care or NC Medicaid Direct. The NC Medicaid Ombudsman also provides issue resolution for NC Medicaid Managed Care members.

- **INFORMATION AND EDUCATION** to inform beneficiaries of their rights and to help answer questions over the phone, website, email, by mail and in person. The NC Medicaid Ombudsman operates as a “no wrong door” information and education access point for all Medicaid beneficiaries and their families.
- **REFERRALS** to support beneficiaries' access to care in collaboration with other resources including state agencies, NCDHHS partners, community-based advocacy groups and legal service organizations. The NC Medicaid Ombudsman staff understand the services provided by other entities that assist Medicaid beneficiaries including health plans, NC Medicaid Enrollment Broker and local DSS agencies so that beneficiaries are referred to the right resource.
- **ISSUE RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT** to serve as the central resource to resolve issues within the NC Medicaid Managed Care delivery system. The NC Medicaid Ombudsman provides a warm hand-off when there is a need to transfer a beneficiary to an external resource in the process of issue resolution.
- **TREND MONITORING** to identify trends or systemic issues in NC Medicaid Managed Care performance. The NC Medicaid Ombudsman provides NCDHHS with strategic solutions to assist the health plans, NC Medicaid Enrollment Broker and NCDHHS to address potential systemic issues across managed care.

NC MEDICAID OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Services provided by the NC Medicaid Ombudsman are not a replacement for the required Grievance and Appeals processes required of each health plan, nor do the services replace the right of a member to appeal through any State-administered appeals system.

The services provided by the NC Medicaid Ombudsman are distinct from the North Carolina’s existing Long-Term Care NC Medicaid Ombudsman that assists residents of long-term care facilities.

The level of assistance and involvement provided by the NC Medicaid Ombudsman may vary depending on the beneficiary’s circumstances. Assistance may range from providing basic managed care information to providing issue resolution assistance for a member disputing a coverage issue with a health plan.

Fact Sheets will be updated periodically with new information. Created Oct. 22, 2021.
For more information, please visit <https://www.medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/transformation>.