

YOUR RESOURCE GUIDE: UNDERSTANDING THE “FREE CARE RULE” AND ADVOCATING FOR MEDICAID IN YOUR SCHOOL!

What is the “free care” rule and how has it affected schools?

The “free care” rule refers to a previously existing Medicaid policy that prohibited Medicaid reimbursement for services that were provided for free to the community at large. This policy affected the ability of schools to receive payment for health services provided to students with Medicaid. For example, if a school offered health screenings to all students, in order to obtain Medicaid reimbursement, the school would also have to seek payment from all other students, including those with and without health insurance. Because schools want to support the health of all students, not just those who have the ability to pay, the “free care” rule has prevented sustainable school health models.

What’s next?

In order for schools to be able to request Medicaid reimbursement for services, each state must make changes to its State Medicaid Plan that include the new interpretation of the “Free Care Rule.”

Advocacy Tools:

Visit these advocacy resources to learn about how you can help schools be able to obtain Medicaid payment for the important health care and services they provide!

- Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services: [Medicaid Payment For Services Provided Without Charge \(Free Care\)](#)
- Community Catalyst: [Advocates’ Guide to the Change in the Medicaid Free Care Rule](#)
- Childhood Asthma Leadership Coalition: [Free Care Rule Regulatory Change](#)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT): [Dismantling Barriers to Health](#)
- Healthy Schools Campaign: [Free Care Rule 101](#)
- The National Public Law Center: [Medicaid and the Free Care Policy](#)