

Children's Home Health Care and EPSDT

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) is a part of the federal Medicaid law that requires each state to provide medically necessary services to children under 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid.

EPSDT's Purpose: *“The goal of EPSDT is to assure that individual children get the health care they need when they need it—the right care to the right child at the right time in the right setting.”ⁱ*

What is home health care?

Services and supplies in the home and community for a child with a chronic health condition or disability.

- Examples of types of services: nursing care, personal care, behavioral health care
- Examples of supplies: hospital bed, wheelchair, ventilator, feeding equipment

How does EPSDT apply in home health care for children?

If a child has a medically necessary need for nursing care or personal care, states have a duty to “arrange for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment.”ⁱⁱ

- EPSDT is a way to help children get services in the least restrictive setting.
- EPSDT can require that a state cover in-home nursing that is medically necessary for a child.
- EPSDT can require that a state cover behavioral health in the home and community.

How is the “treatment” of EPSDT determined in home health care?

The Medical Necessity Standard of EPSDT means “necessary health care, diagnostic services, treatment, and other measures... to correct or ameliorate defects and physical and mental illnesses and conditions...”ⁱⁱⁱ

- Treatment does not have to provide a cure.
- Services or supplies can maintain or improve a child's health condition or relieve pain.

How does this standard work in home health care?

If a child's doctor finds a home health care service or supply is medically necessary, it should be covered by EPSDT.

- For example, if a child needs personal care services for help with bathing, dressing, walking, toileting, or a behavioral health problem, EPSDT should cover personal care at the level the child needs.

What can you do with this information about EPSDT & Home Health Care?

- If you think your child has a medical need that can be cared for in the home, talk to your child's doctor about how EPSDT can help.
- The process to get home health care for your child can be long and may involve many agencies, people, and paperwork. Be patient but also stay alert and in touch with your child's doctor and the case manager in charge of the application.
- If your child already receives home health care through Medicaid but a service or supply has been denied, talk to your child's doctor about how EPSDT can help.

ⁱCMS, EPSDT — A Guide for States: Coverage in the Medicaid Benefit for Children and Adolescents 1 (2014), https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/downloads/epsdt_coverage_guide.pdf

ⁱⁱ42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(43)(C). ⁱⁱⁱSee 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(r)(5).