

Medicaid Waivers: What I need to know for my 0-18 year-old

❖ *What is a Medicaid Waiver?*

Medicaid home and community-based waiver programs provide services and supports to persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who live in their own home, in their family's home, or in other home-like settings in the community. These programs are called "waivers" because the typical financial eligibility requirements necessary to qualify for Medicaid are waived due to the person's disability.

Home and Community-Based Services (HCS)

The Home and Community-based Services program provides individualized services and supports to persons with intellectual disabilities who are living with their family, in their own home or in other community settings, such as small group homes.

[Home and Community-Based Services \(HCS\)](#)

Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)

CLASS provides home- and community-based services to people with related conditions as a cost-effective alternative to placement in an intermediate care facility for individuals with an intellectual disability or a related condition. A related condition is a disability, other than an intellectual disability, that originated before age 22 and that affects a person's ability to function in daily life.

[Community Living Assistance and Support Services \(CLASS\)](#)

Medically Dependent Child Program (MDCP)

The program provides services to support families caring for children and young adults aged 20 and younger who are medically dependent and to encourage de-institutionalization of children and young adults who reside in nursing facilities. MDCP provides respite, flexible family support services, minor home modifications, adaptive aids, transition assistance services, employment assistance, supported employment and financial management services through a STAR Kids or STAR Health managed care organization.

[The Medically Dependent Children Program \(MDCP\)](#)

Deaf Blind Multiple Disability (DBMD)

The DBMD program provides home and community-based services to people who are deaf-blind with multiple disabilities as a cost-effective alternative to institutional placement. The program focuses on increasing opportunities for consumers to communicate and interact with their environment.

[Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities \(DBMD\)](#)

Youth Empowerment Services (YES)

The Youth Empowerment Services Waiver is a 1915(c) Medicaid program that helps children and youth with serious mental, emotional and behavioral difficulties.

[Youth Empowerment Services Waiver Providers | Texas Health and Human Services](#)

❖ ***Why is it important to sign my child up to be on the waiver waitlists?***

Despite the long wait lists, these programs are incredible resources available to support your child for his/her entire life. One of the greatest things about these waivers is that you also automatically get Medicaid health insurance in addition to the support services they each provide. This can be key throughout your child's life, particularly when they turn 26 and would no longer be allowed on your family's health insurance. **As long as your child never has more than \$2,000 in assets in his/her name (not including a special needs trust), they can remain on the waiver indefinitely** (and, therefore, Medicaid), with the exception of the MDCP, which is only for minors.

❖ ***How do I sign my child up to be on the waitlist?***

You do not have to fill out paperwork in order to have your child placed on these lists! They are truly just quick phone calls where you give some basic information in order that they can periodically update your place on the list and ensure that your information is still correct. (They are required to do this at least every 2 years.) Again, you do not fill out any paperwork or send verification of disability until your child comes to the top of the list.

While you can only obtain services from one waiver at a time, you can be on as many wait lists as your child qualifies for. You can also be on a wait list while receiving services from another waiver, which is recommended in case your child's needs ever change. Unless your child qualifies for the DBMD or YES Waivers, you will want to place your he/she on the lists for the Medically Dependent Child Program (MDCP), Home and Community-Based Services (HCS), and the Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) waivers. **Keep in mind that current wait times are 3-5 years for MDCP, 10-12 years for CLASS, and 14 years for HCS.**

Here are the steps you take to do this:

1) For the MDCP and CLASS waivers (and DBMD), call Health and Human Services at:

877-438-5658 and say, "I would like to place my child on the interest lists for CLASS and MDCP, or DBMD."

2) For the HCS waiver, call your Local Intellectual and Developmental Agency (LIDDA) which, in Lubbock, is StarCare at 806-740-1421. You will say, "I would like to place my child on the interest list for HCS." **For the YES waiver, call StarCare at 806-500-3689.**

3) Make sure that, for each waiver, you write down your "interest list number" that they will give you, and ask that they send you a letter of "verification of intent". Your interest list number is usually just the date you are placed on the list and doesn't imply place on the list. They

should call every 2 years to update your demographic information, but you will want to call them if you don't receive any correspondence (use the same numbers as above unless otherwise listed on your letter). **Make sure you give them any new addresses and phone numbers if those change at any point, or else you could be dropped from the list.** If you have your letter, you can appeal being dropped from the list, so it is imperative that you keep it in a safe place.

4) Given the wait times, it is most likely that your child will get to the top of the MDCP list first. If he/she happens to get top of CLASS or HCS first, you will likely want to accept one of those and then turn down MDCP when they are eligible for that, because HCS and CLASS are better programs for most families. However, always verify what services he/she will actually be able to receive before turning down or dropping any waiver for another. **Also, always put your child's name back onto the list you turn down, in case their needs change in the future.**

5) Assuming your child gets services through MDCP first, this waiver program ends at age 21. MDCP recipients transition automatically to the StarPlus program. Those benefits aren't as good as HCS or CLASS, so stay on those lists since you will likely prefer those once your child's name is pulled.

For a list and comparison chart of all waivers, click here:

[Medicaid Waiver Comparisons \(disabilityrightstx.org\)](http://disabilityrightstx.org)