



# CHAP ADCOCACY BRIEF

## *Understanding the 2025–2026 Eligibility Changes to DC Medicaid & the DC Health Care Alliance*

November 2025



### KEY CHANGES TO THE HEALTH CARE ALLIANCE PROGRAM

**Effective October 1, 2025**, here are important eligibility and programmatic changes

#### ELIGIBILITY CHANGES

- No new enrollments for adults age 26+ (unless pregnant).
- Income limit lowered from 215% FPL to 138% FPL.
- Children (0–20), young adults (21–25), and pregnant people remain eligible.
- Applicants must:
  - Be DC residents
  - Not qualified for Medicaid
  - Meet new lower income limits

#### PROGRAM STRUCTURE CHANGES:

- Alliance moves from Managed Care to Fee-for-Service (directly managed under DHCF).
- Beneficiaries will no longer receive services through MCO plans.
- Limited service package, now excluding:
  - Non-emergency transportation
  - Vision and hearing
  - Home health services
  - Dental
  - Podiatry

Families, especially Black, Latine, immigrant students with disabilities and special health care needs, cannot afford disruption in access to full-spectrum health care services. A successful system must be collaborative, community-rooted, transparent, and adequately resourced.

#### ACTION STEPS FOR FAMILIES

- **Check District Direct for renewal notices and coverage updates.**
- **Renew on time; a late renewal may result in losing access.**
- **Update all contact information in District Direct.**
- **Call Public Benefits Call Center: (202) 727-5355 for help.**



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### THE NEW HEALTHY DC BASIC HEALTH PLAN (BHP)

**Effective January 1, 2026**, the Healthy DC Plan creates new “low cost” coverage for 133–200% FPL, particularly for:

- Adults losing Medicaid due to income
- Lawfully present immigrants under 200% FPL
- Those excluded from Medicaid due to the 5-year bar.

### KEY FEATURES

- No-cost or low-cost premiums.
- Marketplace-level benefits (Essential Health Benefits)
- Continuity of care promise:
  - Families transitioning from Medicaid can stay with the same MCO if that carrier participates in BHP.
- Year-round enrollment during 2026, shifting to open enrollment in later years.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHAP MEMBERS

CHAP members should help families:

- Understand their eligibility
- Navigate & document renewals/terminations
- Connect with legal, linguistic, and health access resources
- Prepare alternative care plans if benefits are lost

### WHY THESE CHANGES MATTER

DC families (especially those with CYSHCN) may experience:

- Sudden loss of coverage for adults 26+
- Reduced benefits affecting continuity of specialty care
- Confusion with multiple program shifts
- Increased fear for mixed-status and undocumented households
- Difficulty navigating District Direct without language access

### KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Public Benefits Call Center:** (202) 727-5355
- **Health Care Ombudsman:** (202) 724-7491
- **Update all contact information in District Direct.**
- **District Direct: Call Public Benefits Call Center: (202) 727-5355 for help.**