

Talking Points for Key Stakeholders and Decision Makers

Below are talking points to encourage state to implement the change in the free care rule. We included sub-points to incorporate if appropriate. Advocates should use their own words to best express these sentiments and ensure that conversations flow as naturally as possible. The talking points are separated by key stakeholders and decision makers—all with the goal of gaining support for implementation of the rule change to broaden access to services for children.

The Ask: Support robust access to health services in schools by leveraging the change in the free care rule, enabling schools to bill Medicaid for eligible services:

- Medicaid provides high-quality, cost-effective, and accessible health care for millions of children. It is an important program for our children’s long-term health and their families’ financial security.
- However, access to Medicaid providers and services remain challenging for working families—these challenges range from taking time off work and finding transportation to speaking the same language as their provider.
- But thanks to a change in the “free care rule,” school systems can now leverage Medicaid dollars to expand and support a robust set of health services inside school walls.
- Fully implementing the change in the free care rule enables schools to meet kids where they are and provide needed health services such as preventive screenings and chronic care management for asthma or diabetes.
- A healthy child is ready and able to learn.

Health stakeholders can be important voices in spurring state action needed to fully implement the change in the free care rule. In many cases, a state plan amendment is needed and health advocates are experienced in advancing SPA work; their partnership can be helpful. When talking to health stakeholders such as children’s health advocates, behavioral health advocates and other health service providers and supporters:

- Thanks to the change in the “free care rule,” school systems can now leverage Medicaid dollars to expand and support a robust set of health services inside school walls.
- Providing health services in schools is a smart way to match local investment in school health with federal dollars.
- Fully implementing the change in the free care rule enables schools to meet kids where they are and provide needed health services such as preventive screenings and chronic care management for asthma or diabetes.
- School-based health services can be an integral piece of addressing health disparities; children eligible for [Medicaid are disproportionately children of color](#).
 - Schools are uniquely positioned to address health disparities by ensuring children can gain needed access to both health and human services. This allows kids to reach their full health and educational potential.
- A healthy child is ready and able to learn.

Education stakeholders can be important to implementing a change in the free care rule because they see the day to day experience of children who lack robust access to health services. Education partners can add strength to a coalition by bringing new voices from the school level into the conversation. When talking to education partners such as local school boards, school nurses, school counselors and principals:

- [Children who face health issues cannot succeed in school](#)—poor health impacts both a child’s long-term economic and health outcomes.
- School health services are a great opportunity to support both a child’s wellness and educational goals by providing continuity of care for health needs, reducing absenteeism due to health issues and increasing their ability to advocate for their own health.
- Medicaid reimbursement for Medicaid services provided in schools frees up dollars to invest back in the school health service workforce and needed health care services for kids.
- A healthy child is ready and able to learn.

Key government officials are important to engage because they will drive the change in policy; they will be the target of advocacy for coalitions working on the free care rule change. When talking to key governmental decision makers such as Medicaid agency leaders and staff, Department of Education staff, Governors and key legislators:

- [Children who face health issues cannot succeed in school](#)—poor health impacts both a child’s long-term economic and health outcomes.
- Providing health services in schools is a smart way to match local investment in school health with federal dollars.
 - Increasing billing capabilities for local education agencies (LEAs) will translate into greater efficiency and direct federal dollars into school health.
 - Implementing the change in the free care rule can include additional administrative dollars for state-level Medicaid capacity.
- Medicaid reimbursement for Medicaid services provided in schools frees up dollars to invest back in the school health service workforce and needed health care services for kids.
- A healthy child is ready and able to learn.

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