

MEDI-CAL (MEDICAID)

Medicaid is the nation's major publicly-financed program, jointly financed by the federal and State governments, for providing health insurance to low-income people. Authorized in 1965 under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, Medicaid acts as a safety net for those unable to purchase health insurance. At the federal level, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) oversees the Medicaid program. In California, the Medicaid Program is known as Medi-Cal, and is administered by the Department of Health Services. At the local level, county welfare departments determine the eligibility of applicants for Medi-Cal (San Francisco Department of Human Services).

Eligibility

Being poor does not automatically qualify a person for Medi-Cal. Only persons who fall into particular "categories" such as people receiving cash assistance or low-income children and pregnant women are eligible. In California, Medi-Cal has extended eligibility to individuals in optional categories, beyond those required by federal law. The four major Medi-Cal eligibility categories are:

- *Categorically Needy*. Includes families or individuals who receive cash assistance through CalWORKS, California's version of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Program (SSI/SSP) for aged, blind, or disabled individuals. CalWORKS and SSI/SSP beneficiaries automatically receive Medi-Cal eligibility cards and pay no part of their medical expenses for the covered services.
- *Medically Needy*. Includes certain families with dependent children and aged, blind, or disabled persons. Depending on their income level and household size, these individuals may have a "share of cost" or must first pay for a portion of their medical expenses ("spend down" to a certain level) before qualifying for aid. Medically Needy eligibles do not receive Public Assistance cash grants because they have too much income or resources.
- *Medically Indigent*. Includes low-income pregnant women and children under age 21, certain refugees, and certain individuals in long-term care facilities.
- *Newer Eligibles/Special Programs*. Includes a variety of eligibles such as undocumented persons and pregnant women and children who meet specific income criteria.

Scope of Benefits

California's Medi-Cal Program has a broad scope of benefits compared to many other states. In all states, Medi-Cal covers a core of basic services required by federal law, including hospital inpatient and outpatient care, physician visits, laboratory tests and x-rays, family planning, regular examinations for children under age 21, and nursing home and home health care. In addition, California has exercised the option to cover additional services under Medi-Cal, covering 28 of 31 optional services such as prescription drugs, adult dental, durable medical equipment, chiropractic and podiatry services, and medical supplies.

How Services Are Accessed

San Francisco is one of twelve California counties in which certain eligibles, including many children, youth, and families, must enroll in one of two managed care health plans available in the County. The two health plans available in San Francisco are Blue Cross of California and San Francisco Health Plan. Currently, about 33,500 Medi-Cal recipients are enrolled in managed care in San Francisco. Eligibles who enroll in a health plan choose a provider from a provider list from the plan. Medi-Cal eligibles who do not obtain services through a health plan choose their providers from those who

accept Medi-Cal (“fee-for-service”). In both “fee-for-service” and in health plans, public and private providers receive reimbursement for providing services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

Number of Medi-Cal Eligibles

Throughout the nation, about 36 million people are covered by Medi-Cal, or approximately half of poor Americans. In 1996, San Francisco ranked 12th among 58 California counties in the total number of Medi-Cal eligibles, with 117,398 average monthly eligibles (about 5 million eligibles statewide). However, San Francisco ranked 32nd among California counties in the percentage of the population receiving Medi-Cal (15.3%) during the same year, slightly lower than the state average (16.6%).¹ Many more individuals could receive Medi-Cal but are often deterred from applying for benefits due to the complex eligibility process.

Age. In January 1997, there were about 40,000 Medi-Cal eligibles in San Francisco under age 21, accounting for about one-third (35%) of all Medi-Cal eligibles (113,826) in the City.² This proportion

Medi-Cal Eligibles, By Age Groups, San Francisco and California, January 1997				
<u>Age Group</u>	San Francisco		California	
	#	%	#	%
<1	3,082	3%	235,213	4%
1-5	12,125	11%	1,000,524	19%
6-10	9,563	8%	764,160	14%
11-15	7,985	7%	567,960	11%
16-20	7,129	6%	406,033	8%
Subtotal, 0-20	39,884	35%	2,973,890	56.1%
21+	73,942	65%	2,323,088	44%
Total	113,826	100%	5,296,978	100%

Source: California Department of Health Services, Medi-Cal Eligibility By Zip Code Table, January 1997

is much lower than the state average of 56% of Medi-Cal eligibles who are under age 21. (Refer to the Appendix for detailed data.)

Aid Categories. Most children, youth, and families qualify for Medi-Cal through their eligibility for cash assistance under CalWORKS.³ As of January 1997, 35,514 individuals, or 31% of all San

¹ California Department of Health Services, Medi-Cal Program, County Population, Medi-Cal Eligibles, and Medi-Cal Eligibles as a Percent of Population, Calendar Year 1996

² As of October 1996, there were 41,038 eligibles less than 21 years of age in San Francisco – also refer to the Appendix for detailed data.

³ CalWORKS is California’s version of the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) which replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program.

Francisco’s Medi-Cal eligibles received Medi-Cal in conjunction with “Public Assistance CalWORKS” compared to the statewide average of 53%.⁴ These individuals included both parent/guardian and dependent beneficiaries. In addition, there were over 10,000 Medi-Cal eligibles within the “Medically Needy CalWORKS” category which is designated for certain low-income families with children.

Many children and youth receive Medi-Cal under additional categories not linked to CalWORKS. In January 1997, these eligibles included over 4,000 youth receiving Medi-Cal under the “Medically Indigent Youth” category and over 3,000 children and youth receiving Medi-Cal under the 100 to 185% of Poverty categories.

Medi-Cal Eligibles, By Aid Categories, San Francisco and California, January 1997				
<u>Aid Category</u>	San Francisco		California	
	#	%	#	%
Public Assistance CalWORKS	35,514	31.0%	2,816,301	53.2%
Medically Needy CalWORKS	10,224	8.9%	434,544	8.2%
Medically Indigent Youth	4,106	3.6%	276,796	5.2%
100-200% of Poverty	3,412	3.0%	204,191	3.9%
Other Aid Categories	61,301	53.5%	1,565,182	29.5%
Total	114,557	100.0%	5,297,014	100.0%

Source: California Department of Health Services, Medi-Cal Eligibility By Zip Code, January 1997

By Neighborhood. In January 1997, over half of San Francisco’s Medi-Cal eligibles under age 21 resided within five City neighborhoods as defined by zip codes. The neighborhoods with the greatest number of Medi-Cal eligibles under age 21 were Inner Mission (5,734; 14.4% of total eligibles under age 21%), Bayview Hunters Point (5,616; 14.1%), Ingleside/Excelsior (4,070; 10.2%), Visitacion Valley (3,345; 8.4%), and Tenderloin/Civic Center (1,952; 4.9%). All these neighborhoods have a large number children and youth. (Refer to the Appendix for more detailed information.)

⁴ There is a discrepancy between the total number of San Francisco Medi-Cal eligibles (114,557) in the table, “Medi-Cal Eligibles, By Aid Category, San Francisco and California, January 1997” and the total number of San Francisco Medi-Cal eligibles (113,826) in the table, “Medi-Cal Eligibles, By Age Groups, San Francisco and California, January 1997), with a difference of 731 eligibles or less than 0.7%. These differences were acknowledged by the data source (California Department of Health).

**Medi-Cal Eligibles,
Ages 0-20, By Zip Code,
San Francisco, January 1997**

<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
94110	Inner Mission	5,734	14.4%
94124	Bayview Hunters Point	5,616	14.1%
94112	Ingleside-Excelsior	4,070	10.2%
94134	Visitacion Valley	3,345	8.4%
94102	Tenderloin/Civic Center	1,952	4.9%
94115	Western Addition	1,864	4.7%
94109	Polk/Russian Hill	1,643	4.1%
94103	South of Market	1,562	3.9%
94121	Outer Richmond	1,483	3.7%
94122	Sunset	1,457	3.7%
-	Other	11,158	28.0%
	TOTAL	39,884	100.0%

Source: California Department of Health Services, Medi-Cal Eligibility By Zip Code, January 1997

Approximately 29% of San Francisco's residents under age 21 received Medi-Cal. However, the percentage of residents under age 21 receiving Medi-Cal within each neighborhood varies widely. Bayview Hunters Point is the top ranking neighborhood, with nearly 61% of the population under age 21 receiving Medi-Cal. Seven additional neighborhoods exceed the City's average of 29% of children and youth receiving Medi-Cal. These include South of Market (48.0%), Tenderloin/Civic Center (46.5%), Western Addition (45.2%), Rincon/Potrero Hill (45.1%), Visitacion Valley (32.2%), Inner Mission (31.4%), and Polk/Russian Hill (29.5%).

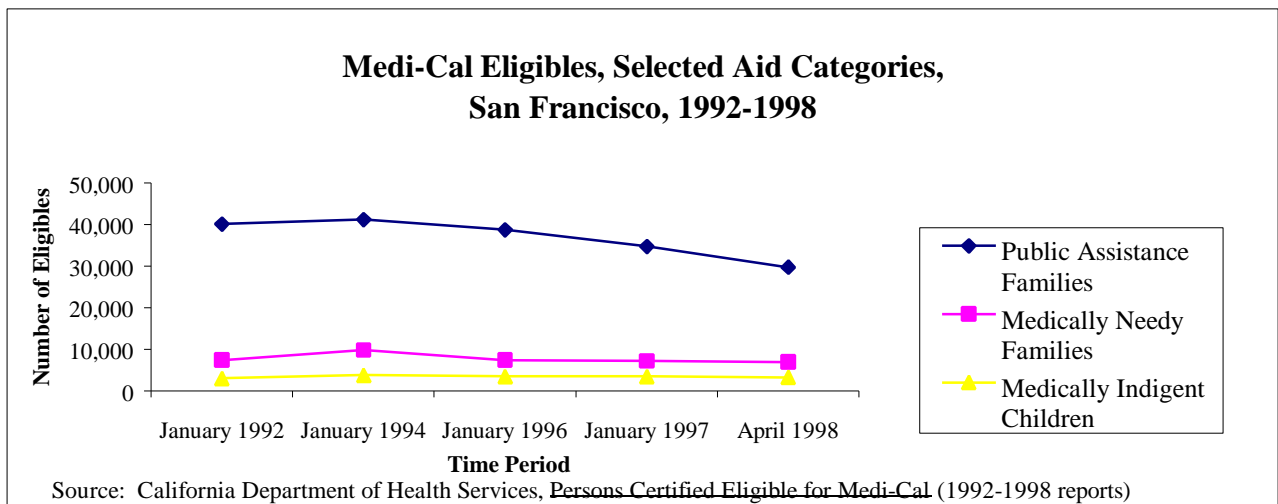
**Medi-Cal Eligibles As A Percent of Population,
Ages 0-20, By Zip Code,
San Francisco, January 1997**

<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Neighborhood</u>	Medi-Cal Eligibles	Population Ages 0-20	% of Pop'n On M-Cal
94124	Bayview-Hunter's Point	5,616	9,228	60.9%
94103	South of Market	1,562	3,254	48.0%
94102	Tenderloin/Civic Center	1,952	4,196	46.5%
94115	Western Addition	1,864	4,123	45.2%
94105/7	Rincon/Potrero Hill	1,057	2,346	45.1%
94134	Visitacion Valley	3,345	10,375	32.2%
94110	Inner Mission	5,734	18,253	31.4%
94109	Polk/Russian Hill	1,643	5,577	29.5%
94104/11/33	Finan'l/Telegr'/N.Bch/C'town	1,289	4,703	27.4%
94112	Ingleside-Excelsior	4,070	16,638	24.5%
-	Other	11,752	60,002	19.6%
-	Total	39,884	138,695	28.8%

Source: California Department of Health Services, Medi-Cal Eligibility By Zip Code, January 1997

Note: Population based on 1990 Census.

Trends. From January 1992 to April 1998, the total number of Medi-Cal eligibles in San Francisco decreased 3.8% (from 103,316 to 99,404) compared to a 6.4% increase in the state as a whole. During



the same time period, there was a dramatic decline (25.9%) in the number of San Francisco Medi-Cal eligibles under the Public Assistance CalWORKS category (from 41,061 to 29,703), in contrast to a

statewide decline of only 4.9%. The number of San Francisco Medi-Cal eligibles under the Medically Needy Families category dropped by only 5.8% (from 7,385 to 6,954), compared to a statewide increase of 47.3%. The number of San Francisco Medi-Cal eligibles under the Medically Indigent children category increased by 7.5% (from 3,007 to 3,232) compared to a statewide increase of 43.1%. (Refer to the Appendix for detailed data.)