

## Unemployment Insurance & Medicare Vs. Medicaid

### Like All Insurance, You're Protected

State unemployment programs can be a powerful tool in helping to reduce economic hardship caused by job losses during an economic recession or pandemic. Unemployment benefits provide temporary income support to those who become unemployed due to no fault of their own, allowing them to maintain a minimum level of financial stability while they search for new employment. This economic relief can help prevent long-term poverty and homelessness and assist individuals in making ends meet during periods of high unemployment.

### How This Played Out In The Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many states have expanded their unemployment programs to ensure that everyone affected by the crisis is able to access the assistance they need. These policies have included waiving waiting periods, increasing benefit amounts, and extending eligibility requirements to include self-employed individuals and independent contractors who were not previously eligible for unemployment benefits. In addition, many states have also eliminated disqualifications for those who left their jobs due to health issues related to the virus. This expansion was made possible through additional federal funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The CARES Act provided much needed support for state unemployment programs by increasing weekly benefit amounts across all 50 states, allowing workers in every state access higher levels of support than had been available in times past. Similarly, it allowed states to extend benefits beyond 26 weeks (the normal limit), up to 39 weeks depending on a state's individual labor market conditions - providing additional weeks of income support that would otherwise not have been available.

State unemployment programs are critical in helping those affected by job losses due to economic recessions or pandemics make ends meet while they search for new employment opportunities. By providing increased benefit amounts and extended eligibility requirements, these policies help ensure that everyone affected by these crises has access to the resources they need so that they may avoid financial hardships and continue towards self-sufficiency as soon as possible.

### There's Another Few Programs Worth Knowing About

When comparing the two healthcare programs, Medicare and Medicaid, there are some stark differences in regards to the population of people they cover and how they are funded.

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people 65 or older, certain younger individuals with disabilities, and individuals with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). It is largely funded by various payroll taxes from employers and employees as well as general revenue.

Medicaid on the other hand, is a state run health insurance program which covers low-income individuals including children, pregnant women, parents of dependent children, seniors and people with disabilities. Medicaid is funded jointly by states and the federal

government; consequently each state's program may have different eligibility requirements based on its own funding resources.

Medicare typically covers most medical costs such as doctor visits, hospital stays, preventive services like screenings and vaccines. It also covers durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs or walkers. In contrast to Medicare's coverage of acute care services, Medicaid typically covers long-term care services such as nursing home care for medically necessary conditions but does not cover outpatient prescription drugs. Moreover it can assist in covering the cost of other health care needs like transportation to doctor visits or non-emergency medical services that aren't covered by traditional health insurance plans like mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment.

In summary both programs serve a very important role in providing access to quality healthcare for citizens who need it; however their criteria for eligibility extends beyond just age or income level marked by differences in how they are funded giving those who qualify different benefits under each plan accordingly.

**STANDARDS:** 6.12.9a, 6.12.9b