

Administrator Information on the School Health and Related Services (SHARS)/Medicaid Program

What I need to know

The SHARS program allows public school districts to receive federal reimbursements through Medicaid for providing designated related services as documented in a special education student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). There are multiple qualifying services such as assessments, counseling, nursing services, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychological services, physical therapy and personal care services. Most campuses are responsible for the identification and documentation of **personal care services**. Personal care services are services provided to special education students to assist them with tasks a typically developing student would be able to perform without human assistance such as toileting, personal hygiene, escorting, monitoring and supervision.

Why is this important?

To ensure students are ready and able to achieve academically, schools must be poised to meet the myriad health, emotional and social needs that can negatively impact student performance. SHARS reimbursement support the delivery of such services. This funding is not new money, but instead based on the actual services and expenditures the district has in providing health related services to students in special education. Funds are used to offset spending across the district. Depending on the size of the district and the number of eligible students served, the SHARS reimbursements can range from thousands of dollars to hundreds of thousands.

How can I best support the district and my campus staff?

Ensure all staff are documenting appropriate SHARS services in the student IEP. This includes making sure students who have a medical necessity for SHARS have a need documented in the IEP, PLAAFP and any related services supplement. Once the service(s) is (are) documented in the IEP, it is important that a key staff member obtains Parental Consent to bill Medicaid for the services (one time only), as well as remind the parent annually of this consent. Maintaining accurate documentation on the delivery of services via a software program or district guideline is essential for billing and in case of program audits.

If a parent questions you about SHARS reimbursements because he/she is concerned about the loss of Medicaid benefits, assure them that according to federal guidance the Medicaid services the child receives at school does not affect the Medicaid services received outside of school. There is no benefits cap. The State Medicaid Agency is required to seek reimbursements from the parent's private insurance (if the family has private insurance) for services delivered via SHARS. The private insurance company is not required to pay, but our State Medicaid Agency is required to make the attempt at recouping funds. This can be confusing for parents and your help in guiding them to your SHARS department can help ease their concern.

We need your support to bring in every dollar that your district is eligible for. This money goes to support education in your district. Individually we are strong, but together we are stronger.

