

Rural Access to Medical Care

A “medical home” is a collaborative way to provide comprehensive, high quality primary medical care. For more information, visit our *Medical Home* [Fact Sheet](#) series. In a rural setting, barriers exist that may make it difficult to establish a good medical home including limited access to providers due to location, transportation needs, or simply a shortage of providers. The unique health needs of rural families and agricultural workers require culturally effective care.

What is Primary Care, and How Do I Get It? Many health insurance plans require you to choose a Primary Care Physician (PCP). This is your main doctor who provides non-emergency care such as well visits or screenings, acute care for a minor illness or infection, or diagnosis/treatment for a health problem. Contact your health plan to find a PCP near you. For more information on using your health care plan, see our *Insurance Basics* or *Using Your Medicaid* [Fact Sheets](#).

What is Urgent Care? Urgent care centers treat illnesses or injuries that are not serious enough to warrant emergency room services, but still require immediate medical attention. Urgent care centers are walk-in clinics that offer much-needed healthcare access points for rural residents. Providers at these clinics can support your medical home by communicating with your PCP. To find an urgent care clinic near you, search at this link: <https://www.solvehealth.com/in/s/indiana-urgent-care>

Emergency Room Services: When facing a life-threatening emergency, dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. Have a plan and know the fastest route to the emergency room, or request an ambulance.

What if I need mental and/or behavioral health services? Visit your PCP to discuss your condition. If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, call 911 or 988 or visit your nearest emergency room. For additional information, see our *Mental Health* [Fact Sheet](#).

What are Some Other Options for Medical Care?

Community Health Centers across Indiana provide medical care to individuals and families. Services are free to some patients, and there may be a sliding scale for services based on income. Search by zip code or clickable map at Indiana Primary Health Care Association: <https://www.indianapca.org/about-chcs/find-a-chc/> or call 317-630-0845 to find a clinic near you.

Indiana Health Centers are located throughout the state providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care to underserved and uninsured populations. Services may be offered on a sliding fee scale to patients of all ages who might not otherwise be able to afford quality healthcare. Patients of these centers will receive access to health care regardless of their income, race, or background. While the resources available at each location vary, some offer free medical

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care, prescription assistance, vision care, wellness checks, flu shots, and basic check-ups. Many clinics provide specialty care referrals if needed. Locations (by county) can be found here: <https://www.indianahealthonline.org/>

Can I get a Ride to my Doctor? Traditional Medicaid (waiver) participants are eligible to receive transportation services to and from medical and dental appointments. To request a ride for non-emergency care, Traditional Medicaid members should call [Verida, Inc.](#) at 1-855-325-7586 at least two business days in advance. Package A & Package C participants must contact their health plan to arrange for transportation services. If your child participates in [Children's Special Health Care Services \(CSHCS\)](#), you may be eligible for transportation reimbursement, if certain criteria are met. Contact CSHCS at 1-800-475-1355 for details. Rural Transit is available and offers accessible transportation in some areas of the state. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for information: https://www.in.gov/fssa/da/files/AAA_Map.pdf. For more information on transportation, visit our [Transportation Fact Sheet](#) series.

Telemedicine Services: Telemedicine or “telehealth” services provide direct access to a doctor by means of technology (usually video conferencing). Patients can have an appointment with a doctor from the comfort and convenience of their home. Check your coverage benefits to determine whether telehealth services are covered, verify the costs of these services, and find available providers.

Resources for Rural Families

Optimizing Technology: Technological resources can be helpful tools for rural families. The internet, social media, and e-newsletters are valuable sources of information and support. When using the internet, it is important to determine if the source is reliable and up to date. The online tool [Trust It or Trash It](#) may help you verify the credibility of online information.

The Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) provides resources and information about rural health clinics, school health clinics, critical access hospitals, and advocacy: <https://www.indianaruralhealth.org/>

The Rural Health Information Hub is another resource for providers and patients, and it provides details about access points, statistics, maps, rural healthcare news, and more: <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/states/indiana>

In Indiana, a person may dial **2-1-1** on their phone, text their zip code to **898211**, or visit <https://in211.communityos.org/> to be connected to a local resource directory, which may provide information about food, shelter or housing, utilities, health care services, crisis and emergency management, and more.

Programs and systems change often. It is important to ensure that you are using the most current information. This fact sheet was updated August 2024. Please check <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html> for the most recent edition.

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