

Direct Certification with Medicaid for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Overview

Under the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 and the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, the Food and Nutrition Service is conducting demonstration projects to evaluate the use of Medicaid data to identify students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. The evaluation seeks to—

- Describe processes, challenges, and successes in matching Medicaid data with school enrollment data.
- Identify the potential to reach students not directly certified through another program (e.g., the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program).
- Identify the effect of the demonstrations on school meal participation, federal reimbursement costs, and state administrative costs.
- Show how changes to the Medicaid eligibility determination process under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 affect the ability of states to identify and directly certify eligible children.

Seven states participated in school year 2016–2017 demonstrations: California, Florida,

Massachusetts, Nebraska, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia. The demonstrations could potentially expand student access to school meals, reduce administrative burden on districts and schools, and improve certification accuracy.

Insight—

- Evaluated the earlier 2012–2014 demonstrations
- Led qualitative data collection and analysis from states
- Conducted semistructured interviews with state and school district staff and observed direct certification operations
- Conducted telephone interviews with state and school district staff

Products

Final report

