



**An Act to ensure equitable access to health coverage for children with disabilities  
HD 2945/SD 1909**

**Lead Sponsors:** Rep. Dave Rogers and Sen. Sal DiDomenico

**Background**

While over 98% of the Commonwealth's children have some form of health coverage, thousands of children and young adults with disabilities can only access safety net programs with strict limits on covered benefits. Immigration status is the only thing preventing these children from qualifying for MassHealth CommonHealth, a comprehensive coverage program for individuals with disabilities or complex health conditions. Expanding CommonHealth coverage to every young person in the Commonwealth with disabilities is a key step forward in improving health care access to for all children.

**Why is this legislation needed?**

- The safety net programs currently available to children and young adults without a formal immigration status do not cover important services that people with disabilities or complex medical and/or behavioral health conditions need, such as intensive home and community-based behavioral health care or medical supplies like wheelchairs and specialized formula.
- Lack of coverage for these services may result in children needing more acute, emergency or hospital-based care, staying in the hospital longer than necessary or not receiving care altogether.

**Why is this a health equity issue?**

- Comprehensive coverage is especially important for children and young people who have disabilities. Safety net programs do not cover important services and equipment they may need to thrive at home, in school and in their communities.
- Children and young adults in Massachusetts without a formal immigration status are not able to access the same level of coverage as other residents, even if they meet all other eligibility factors.
- Inadequate coverage puts additional stress on children and families who also are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; already experience additional barriers to health care, such as language access; and may face trauma, discrimination and economic insecurity.

**What does this legislation do?**

- This bill would expand MassHealth CommonHealth coverage to children and low-income young adults with disabilities whose only barrier to this coverage is immigration status, providing coverage for many crucial services that are currently out of reach.

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