

Frequently asked questions about the federal government's sharing of personal information

You may have seen reports that the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are sharing Medicaid data with immigration enforcement officials. We understand that these reports have caused deep fear, frustration, and anger across our communities.

What kind of Medicaid information does CMS have?

CMS requires the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to provide monthly reports about how Oregon uses federal funds to provide Medicaid services.

OHA manages Medicaid for 1.4 million Oregonians through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). OHP and Healthier Oregon are names for Medicaid in Oregon.

In its data reports to CMS OHA currently shares information that includes:

- OHP member names, addresses, and dates of birth
- Medicaid ID numbers
- Social security numbers if provided
- Citizenship status

These reports are routine and have been done during previous federal administrations.

NOTE: OHA data reports currently provide citizenship status without identifying if a member is eligible for a program solely due to their immigration status. OHA is continuing to assess how to best meet its CMS data sharing requirements, while protecting personally identifiable information to the greatest extent possible. Elements shared with CMS may change over time to meet OHA's obligation for data reporting.

I thought Healthier Oregon was funded with state money. Why would OHA need to report that information to CMS?

People whose immigration status doesn't allow them to have full Medicaid benefits can enroll in Healthier Oregon. Oregon uses state dollars to fund most Healthier Oregon services except for emergency health care visits. Those are paid for with federal money. Eligibility for Healthier Oregon and emergency services is tied together to help patients get care faster and easier. As a result, all people enrolled in Healthier Oregon were and continue to be included in files shared with CMS because eligibility for federally funded emergency services and Healthier Oregon is tied together. OHA is evaluating and reviewing ways to maintain compliance with federal requirements while protecting members' privacy as much as possible. The Governor has directed the agency to review system changes to separate Healthier Oregon from federally-funded emergency services. This work is currently underway.

What if I'm no longer enrolled in OHP or Healthier Oregon? Does CMS still have my information?

If you ever enrolled in OHP or Healthier Oregon, OHA has at some point shared your personally identifiable information with CMS. That means CMS may know your name, address, citizenship status, and previously submitted immigration status.

Should I cancel my OHP membership?

As stated above, if you ever enrolled in OHP or Healthier Oregon, OHA has at some point shared your information with CMS. That means even if you cancel your OHP or Healthier Oregon membership, CMS may still have personal information about you as historical eligibility data covers a five-year period.

Is it safe to go to the doctor?

We understand you may be afraid that CMS is sharing your information with immigration enforcement. You might decide not to use Medicaid or delay seeking medical care.

OHA's mission is to make sure all people in Oregon have access to medical care to stay healthy and thrive. If you choose not to use Oregon Health Plan for your medical needs, we recommend you speak with your health care provider about other options. If you are concerned about your health, we recommend you consult your provider about your health status.

What is OHA doing to protect people's personal information from misuse?

OHA only shares personally identifiable OHP information with federal agencies when required by law. OHA will continue to meet all legal requirements for data sharing. Beginning in January 2025, OHA stopped sharing data that could be used to identify immigration status. OHA is reviewing how to best meet its CMS data sharing requirements, while protecting personally identifiable information as much as possible. These data elements may change over time as OHA balances compliance requirements with member privacy.

While complex legal and operational factors shape what data is collected and how it is used, OHA's core commitment does not change. OHA prioritizes privacy as a fundamental element of public health and community safety.

OHA is carefully considering how to respond to CMS data requests, knowing the state of Oregon can't control how CMS will use the data. For this reason, OHA is reviewing all legal and policy options available to try to prevent its misuse.

Oregon joined a multistate lawsuit

Oregon is part of a lawsuit to prevent CMS from sharing protected Medicaid information with the Department of Homeland Security. It also seeks to prevent the data from being used for immigration enforcement purposes.

Joining this lawsuit doesn't allow OHA to stop sharing required information about federal programs and funding with CMS. But OHA continues to look at all policy and legal options to protect personally identifiable information.

How is OHA supporting health care providers and community groups?

OHA is committed to working with health care providers and community groups to continue to protect and strengthen the health of every Oregonian, no matter the challenges ahead.

We're developing factsheets and other support materials to help providers confidently provide OHP members with accurate information about data privacy.

We also are partnering with Oregon Department of Human Services and community-based organizations to develop resources focused on data privacy and operational pressures.

How can health care providers and community groups help?

- Providers and partners can share clear, consistent messages with each other and OHP members. Join partner briefings to stay informed and help shape the approach.
- Providers can reassure patients that privacy is one of OHA's core values and that OHA is actively working to clarify data use.
- OHP members, providers, and partners can visit the [OHA Notice of Privacy Practices webpage](#) to learn more.
- Establish procedures for responding to federal immigration agent inquiries. Make sure all your staff understand and know where to find this guidance.
- OHA will continue to share updates transparently as they become available. In the meantime, we invite you to engage with us directly. Share your questions, participate in upcoming webinars, and let us know how we can work together to best serve your communities.

How can I stay informed?

- Contact OHA directly with questions or concerns at Ask.OHP@odhsoha.oregon.gov.
- Visit OHA's [Monitoring Federal Changes and any Impacts on Oregon webpage](#) to get updates on federal changes, their effect on Oregon, and what the state is doing.

Information and help

- Contact OHA directly with questions or concerns at Ask.OHP@odhsoha.oregon.gov.
- The Oregon Department of Human Services [Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement website](#) has resources, fact sheets, news, and updates for immigrant and refugee populations across the state.
- Visit the [Equity Corps of Oregon website](#) to see if you qualify for free legal counsel.
- If you see U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity in your community, call the Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition (PIRC) hotline, 1-888-622-1510. Visit their [website](#) to learn more.
- The Oregon Law Center and Latino Network developed a [packet](#) to help families prepare for emergencies, including immigration detention.

- The National Immigration Law Center developed a [resource library](#) including guides, toolkits, policy briefs and more.
- The Oregon Department of Justice developed the [Sanctuary Promise Community Toolkit](#) covering essential information needed to understand Oregon's Sanctuary Law and report violations.

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer free of charge. Contact the Office of Community Health and Engagement at community.outreach@oha.oregon.gov or 800-699-9075. We accept all relay calls.

External Relations Division
Communications

Phone: 800-699-9075
community.outreach@oha.oregon.gov



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