



Integrating Medicare and Medicaid for Dual-Eligible Individuals



In the United States, those with the most significant health care needs are often covered by 2 separate government health care programs — Medicare and Medicaid. Today, more than 13.6 million low-income older adults and people with disabilities are eligible for and rely on both. These individuals, often referred to as “dual-eligible,” face a fragmented, disjointed system that is challenging to navigate and often leads to worse health outcomes, higher costs, and increased frustration.

Red tape, waste, and lack of coordination cost taxpayers billions and hurt patients.

Waste is built into the system as patients are overwhelmed with confusing choices, and bureaucratic delays to care come at a cost. In addition to poor health outcomes for patients, in every state the lack of care coordination makes caring for the dual-eligible population a key driver of state Medicaid costs. Across the country patients and taxpayers are getting terrible outcomes for large amounts of money.

Dual-eligible people make up 20% of the Medicare population, 13% of the Medicaid population, and account for more than 31% of the spending in both programs.¹

Why is it so complicated?

Medicare and Medicaid are 2 different programs that cover different services and are operated by different arms of the government. Separate rules, processes, providers, payers, and benefits make the joint system difficult to navigate and costly to administer. Additionally, dual-eligible people are most often elderly or disabled with complex health needs:

26% have 5 or more chronic conditions²

46% have at least 1 or more limitations to an activity of daily living³ (e.g., dressing, bathing, toileting)

87% had an income of less than \$20,000⁴

\$550⁺ BILLION

Combined Medicare-Medicaid spending on dual-eligible people in 2022⁵

Improved Integration = Better Care, Less Red Tape

The current fragmented system is costly and confusing. Models that integrate Medicare and Medicaid can reduce duplicative processes, improve access to needed services, and make navigation of care easier for people. Recently introduced legislation including the [Delivering Unified Access to Lifesaving Services \(DUALS\) Act of 2024](#) and the [Helping States Integrate Medicare and Medicaid Act](#) indicate a critical momentum shift toward developing and advancing integrated care models at the state and federal levels.

For more information:

[Arnold Ventures](#) | [Medicare-Medicaid Integration](#)

1. [2025 Beneficiaries Dually Eligible for Medicare and Medicaid](#)
2. <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/a-profile-of-medicare-medicaid-enrollees-dually-eligible/>
3. [2025 Beneficiaries Dually Eligible for Medicare and Medicaid](#)
4. <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/a-profile-of-medicare-medicaid-enrollees-dually-eligible/>
5. [2025 Beneficiaries Dually Eligible for Medicare and Medicaid](#)

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