

Race and ethnicity of the national Medicaid and CHIP population in 2020



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About this brief

WHAT IS THIS BRIEF?

This data brief describes the race and ethnicity of enrollees in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2020, overall and by key subgroups. CMS is releasing this data brief as part of ongoing agency efforts to measure disparities in access to care and make focused, evidence-based investments to improve health equity for the Medicaid and CHIP population. In 2020, Medicaid and CHIP provided coverage for nearly 55 million people of color. These programs provide essential coverage for a population that is more diverse than the broader U.S. population—especially among children, with 61 percent of Medicaid and CHIP enrollees under age 19 being children of color. The 2020 findings for all figures in this brief align closely with the 2019 findings in the *Race and Ethnicity of the National Medicaid and CHIP Population in 2019* data brief. The information in this brief, as well as updated counts that reflect data from later years, are available for download on data.medicaid.gov.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION?

This brief is based on data reported by states to CMS as part of the Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System (T-MSIS). States report information each month via T-MSIS about their enrollees, Medicaid- and CHIP-covered services, payments to providers and managed care organizations, enrollees’ diagnoses and health conditions, and information on providers and managed care plans. These data are converted into the T-MSIS Analytic Files (TAF), which are optimized for research purposes. More information about T-MSIS and TAF is available at [Medicaid.gov](https://www.medicaid.gov).¹ Nearly all states have high quality and complete information on Medicaid and CHIP enrollment, scope of benefits, and age in the TAF, however some states have issues related to their eligibility category data. More information can be found on the DQ Atlas.² This brief also uses 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year data from the Census Bureau. The 2019 ACS data were selected as a comparison for this brief because the Census Bureau did not release the 2020 estimates due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection. More information is available at the Census Bureau website.³

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THIS ANALYSIS?

The figures in this brief include Medicaid and CHIP enrollees from all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Enrollees in Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are not included in this

data brief. Figures 1 and 2 include all Medicaid and CHIP enrollees with any scope of benefits who were enrolled for at least one day in 2020. Figures 3 and 4 include only enrollees with comprehensive Medicaid and CHIP benefits. All figures include enrollees who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare.

HOW ARE RACE AND ETHNICITY MEASURED?

Because race and ethnicity are not considered when determining eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP—and are therefore not required information during application—data from states about the race and ethnicity of their Medicaid and CHIP enrollees can be incomplete or inaccurate. Improving race and ethnicity data is important for identifying disparities and promoting equity in access to care, health outcomes, and quality of care in Medicaid and CHIP. The Centers for Medicaid & CHIP Services (CMCS) within CMS is taking steps to address missing and poor-quality race and ethnicity data by (1) helping states improve their collection and submission of these data and (2) developing indirect estimation methods to provide alternative information when states’ reporting is incomplete or poor quality.

All figures in this brief use enrollees’ reported race and ethnicity when it is available and of good quality (74 percent of enrollees overall); if it is missing or unreliable, the figures use indirectly estimated race and ethnicity (26 percent of enrollees overall). These are the first estimates of the distribution of Medicaid and CHIP enrollees by race and ethnicity and other demographic characteristics to include all Medicaid and CHIP enrollees. CMS based its indirect estimates of race and ethnicity on an enhanced version of a well-validated method that is widely used for this purpose: Bayesian Improved Surname and Geocoding (BISG). BISG⁴ draws on the racial and ethnic distribution associated with a person’s surname and geographic location to estimate the person’s probability of reporting being in each of six racial and ethnic groups. The distribution of race and ethnicity for surnames from the Census Bureau is not available separately for race and ethnicity, so the categories are combined here.⁵ CMS enhanced the standard BISG methodology for these data by supplementing with T-MSIS information about enrollees’ first names and their American Indian and Alaska Native certification. Less than half of states report any multiracial Medicaid or CHIP enrollees, and the accuracy of the indirect estimates for this group is low. Information about multiracial enrollees in this brief should be interpreted with caution.

¹ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/data-systems/macbis/transformed-medicaid-statistical-information-system-t-msis/index.html>

² <https://www.medicaid.gov/dq-atlas/welcome>

³ <https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/acs-1year.html>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6338295/>

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/surnames.html>

What is the racial and ethnic composition of the national Medicaid and CHIP population in 2020, and how does it compare to the entire U.S. population?

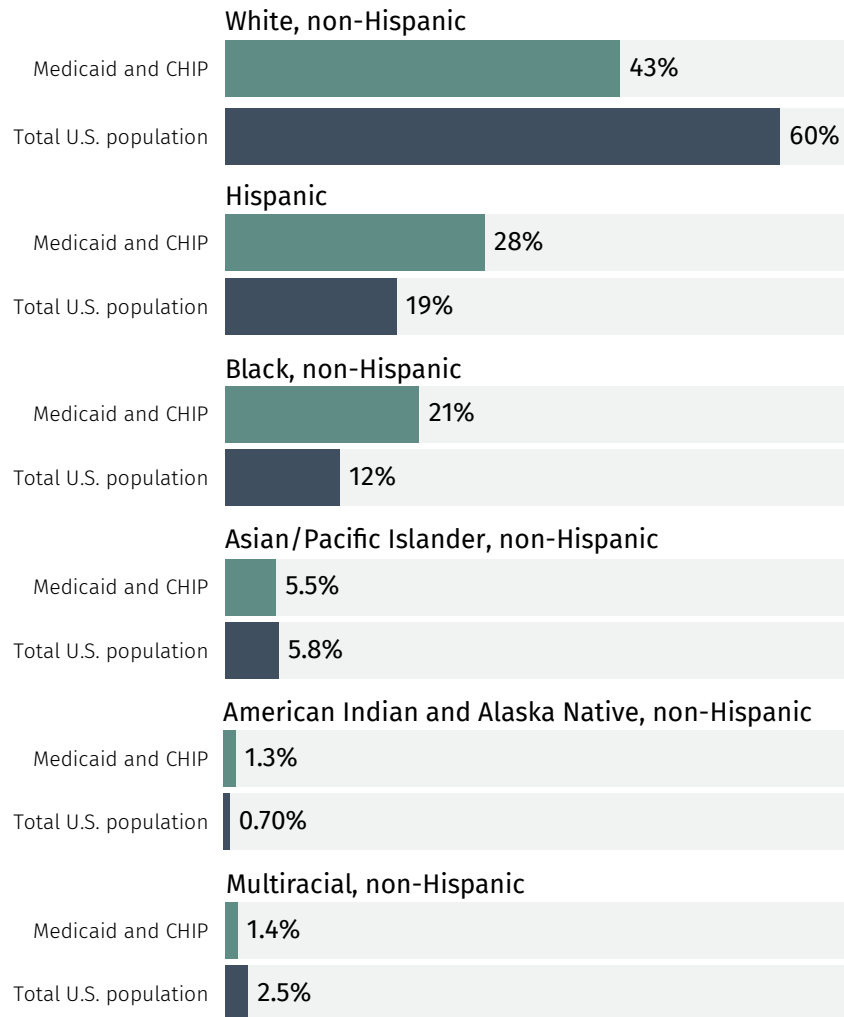


FIGURE 1. RACE AND ETHNICITY OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAID AND CHIP POPULATION IN 2020

■ Medicaid and CHIP enrollees (96M)
■ Total U.S. population (327M)

Over 96 million individuals received some type of health coverage from Medicaid or CHIP at any point in 2020, almost 30 percent of the U.S. population. Enrollees in Medicaid and CHIP are more racially and ethnically diverse than the overall U.S. population. A larger share of Medicaid and CHIP enrollees are Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black than the U.S. population, and a smaller share are non-Hispanic White.

SOURCES: 2020 T-MSIS Analytic Files Annual Demographic and Eligibility File, Release 1; 2020 Race/Ethnicity Imputation Companion File; 2019 American Community Survey.

NOTES: This figure includes Medicaid and CHIP enrollees from all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The U.S. Virgin Islands are not included because data from that territory are not included in the 2020 REI Companion File. Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands do not submit data to T-MSIS. Individuals with “some other race” are not included in the American Community Survey figures.

How does the racial and ethnic composition of the Medicaid and CHIP population with comprehensive benefits in 2020 compare to the population with limited benefits?

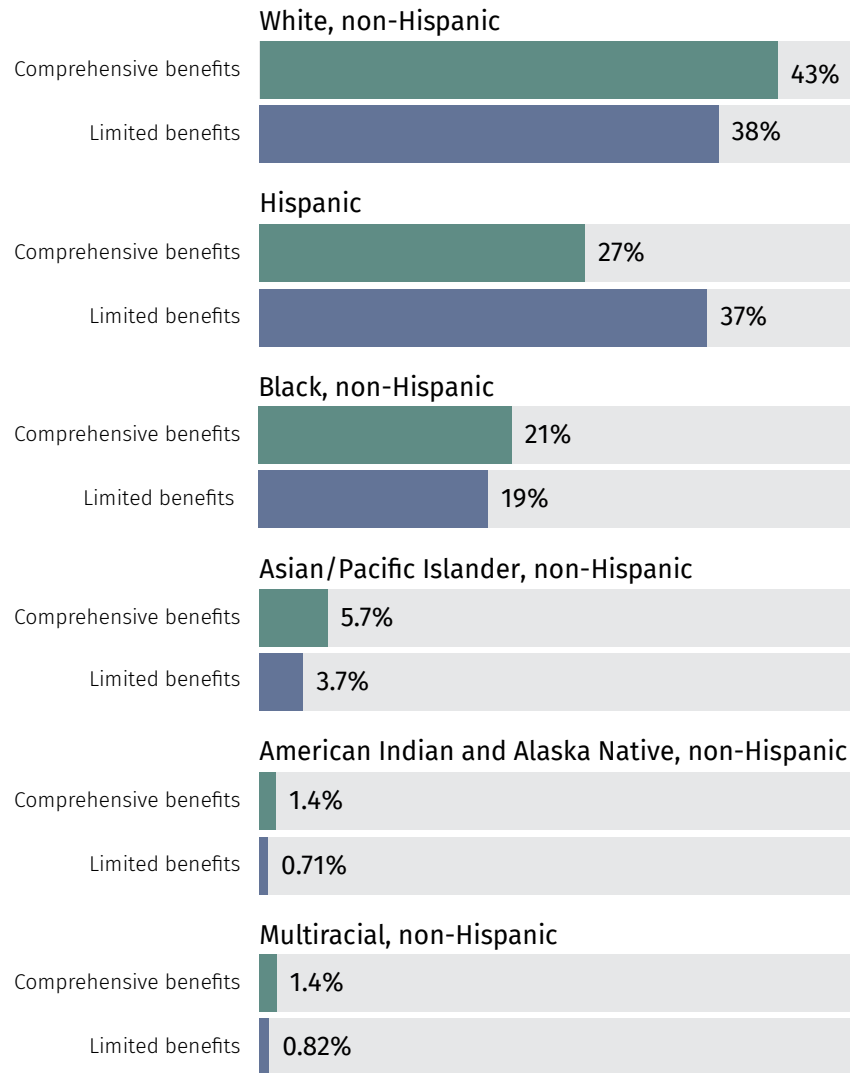


FIGURE 2. RACE AND ETHNICITY OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAID AND CHIP POPULATION IN 2020, BY SCOPE OF BENEFITS

■ Enrollees with comprehensive benefits (88M)
■ Enrollees with limited benefits (8.5M)

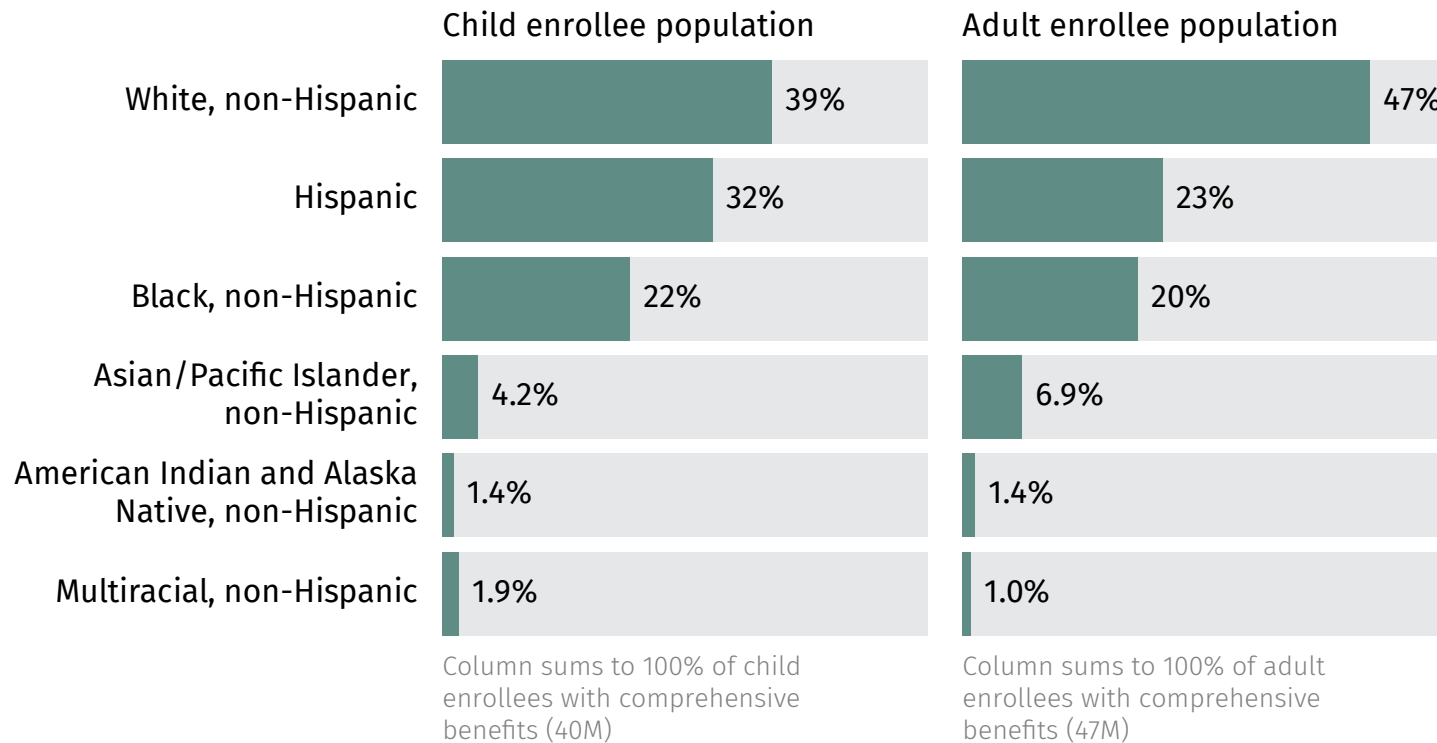
Most people with Medicaid and CHIP coverage qualify for a comprehensive benefit package that meets the minimum essential coverage standard under the Affordable Care Act. A smaller group qualifies for limited benefits only. The most common limited benefit packages in Medicaid are those that cover only family-planning services, emergency services, or assistance with premiums and cost-sharing in Medicare. Medicaid and CHIP enrollees with limited benefits are much more likely to be Hispanic than enrollees with comprehensive benefits.

SOURCES: 2020 T-MSIS Analytic Files Annual Demographic and Eligibility File, Release 1; 2020 Race/Ethnicity Imputation Companion File.

NOTES: This figure includes Medicaid and CHIP enrollees from all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The U.S. Virgin Islands are not included because data from that territory are not included in the 2020 REI Companion File. Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands do not submit data to T-MSIS.

Does the racial and ethnic composition of the child population in Medicaid and CHIP with comprehensive benefits in 2020 resemble the composition of the adult Medicaid and CHIP population?

FIGURE 3. RACE AND ETHNICITY OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAID AND CHIP POPULATION IN 2020, BY AGE



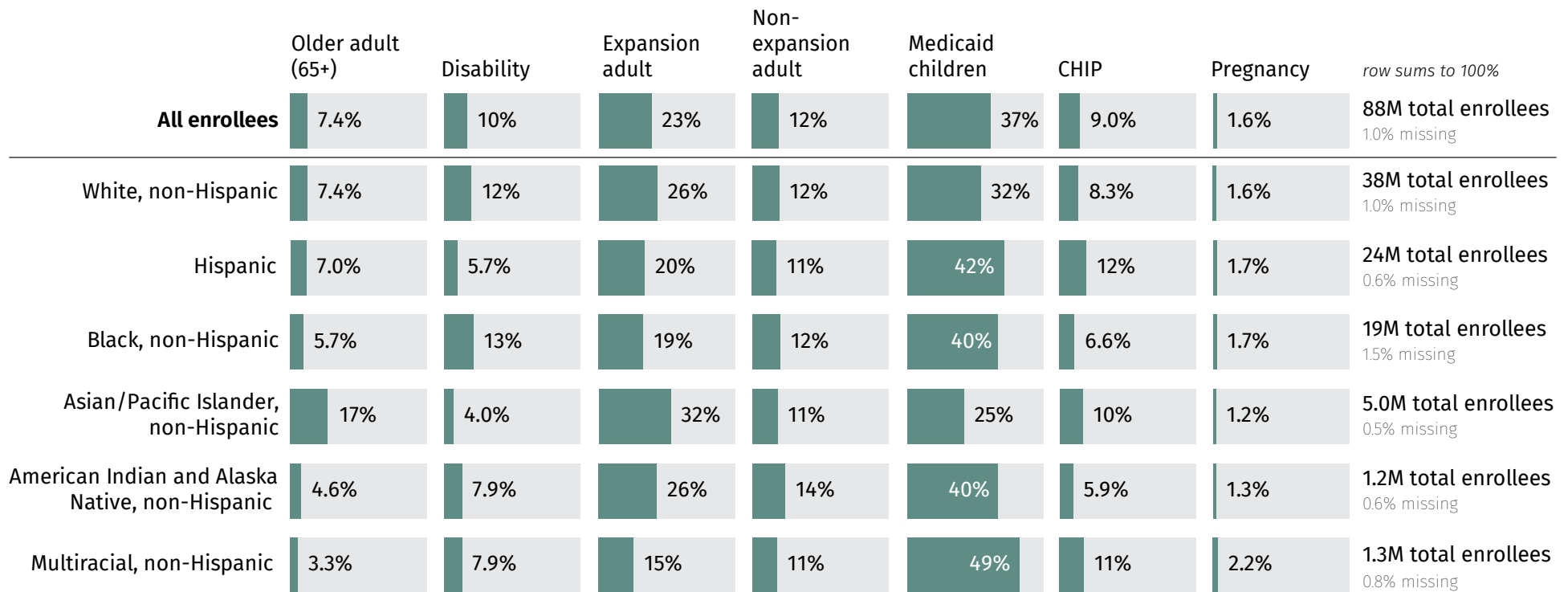
Children (those ages 18 and younger) with comprehensive Medicaid and CHIP coverage are more racially and ethnically diverse than adults (those ages 19 and older) with comprehensive coverage. Adults covered by Medicaid and CHIP are more likely to be non-Hispanic White than children covered by these programs.

SOURCES: 2020 T-MSIS Analytic Files Annual Demographic and Eligibility File, Release 1; 2020 Race/Ethnicity Imputation Companion File.

NOTES: This figure includes Medicaid and CHIP enrollees with comprehensive benefits from all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The U.S. Virgin Islands are not included because data from that territory are not included in the 2020 REI Companion File. Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands do not submit data to T-MSIS.

What are the most common Medicaid and CHIP eligibility categories among enrollees with comprehensive benefits in 2020, and do they vary by race and ethnicity?

FIGURE 4. MEDICAID AND CHIP ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES IN 2020, BY ENROLLEES' RACE AND ETHNICITY



Across all race and ethnicity groups, the most common eligibility category among enrollees with comprehensive coverage is the Medicaid child group, followed by the expansion adult group. Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander enrollees are more likely than other groups to obtain coverage through the older adult (65+) and expansion adult eligibility categories. Non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White enrollees are more likely than other groups to obtain coverage through the disability category.

SOURCES: 2020 T-MSIS Analytic Files Annual Demographic and Eligibility File, Release 1; 2020 Race/Ethnicity Imputation Companion File.

NOTES: This figure includes Medicaid and CHIP enrollees with comprehensive benefits from all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The U.S. Virgin Islands are not included because data from that territory are not included in the 2020 REI Companion File. Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands do not submit data to T-MSIS.

Number of Medicaid and CHIP enrollees of each race and ethnicity group, by scope of benefits, age group, and eligibility category in 2020

The data in these tables are available for download at data.medicicaid.gov. Updated counts that reflect data from later years will be released as they become available on data.medicicaid.gov.

	Total U.S. population (327M)	All Medicaid and CHIP enrollees (96M)	Comprehensive benefits (88M)	Limited benefits (8.5M)	Age		Eligibility category						
					Child (40M)	Adult (47M)	Older adult, 65+ (6.4M)	Disability (8.7M)	Expansion adult (20M)	Non-expansion adult (10M)	Medicaid children (32M)	CHIP (7.9M)	Pregnancy (1.4M)
White, non-Hispanic	197M	41M	38M	3.3M	16M	22M	2.8M	4.5M	9.7M	4.5M	12M	3.1M	0.60M
Hispanic	60M	27M	24M	3.2M	13M	11M	1.7M	1.4M	4.8M	2.5M	10M	2.8M	0.41M
Black, non-Hispanic	41M	20M	19M	1.6M	8.9M	9.6M	1.1M	2.4M	3.6M	2.3M	7.4M	1.2M	0.32M
Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	19M	5.3M	5.0M	0.31M	1.7M	3.3M	0.83M	0.20M	1.6M	0.55M	1.2M	0.51M	0.06M
American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	2.2M	1.3M	1.2M	0.06M	0.54M	0.65M	0.06M	0.09M	0.31M	0.17M	0.48M	0.07M	0.02M
Multiracial, non-Hispanic	8.3M	1.3M	1.3M	0.07M	0.76M	0.49M	0.04M	0.10M	0.19M	0.13M	0.62M	0.13M	0.03M

SOURCES: 2020 T-MSIS Analytic Files Annual Demographic and Eligibility File, Release 1; 2020 Race/Ethnicity Imputation Companion File; 2019 American Community Survey.

NOTES: This table includes Medicaid and CHIP enrollees from all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The U.S. Virgin Islands are not included because data from that territory are not included in the 2020 REI Companion File. Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands do not submit data to T-MSIS. The age and eligibility category columns only include enrollees with comprehensive Medicaid and CHIP benefits.