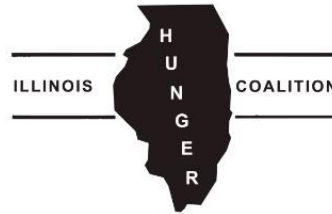


Hunger Hotline:
1-800-359-2163
Se habla español



Transportation and the SNAP Medical Expense Deduction

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 12.5% of Illinois households are food-insecure. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as “Food Stamps,” is one of our most powerful tools to reduce hunger and enable Illinoisans to lift themselves out of poverty.

When calculating the amount of SNAP benefits that a household will get, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) takes into account not only the family’s income, but also their expenses. To accurately determine how much assistance is needed, it is important to understand whether a significant portion of the household’s income is being spent on basic, necessary costs.

The Medical Expense Deduction

Almost 28% of Illinois SNAP recipients are in units with seniors (60 years or older) or persons with disabilities¹. These families often have high costs for health services, meaning that a smaller percentage of their income is available to use towards meals.

For this reason, if a SNAP unit’s out-of-pocket medical expenses exceed \$35 a month, then they are entitled to a Standard Medical Deduction. This deduction will increase the family’s amount of SNAP benefits.

The Standard Medical Deduction for residents of Group Homes or Supportive Living Facilities (SLF) is \$485 a month. The Standard Medical Deduction for all other eligible SNAP units is \$245.

SNAP units with allowable medical expenses above the aforementioned Standard Deduction amount will receive an Actual Expense Medical Deduction so that they are credited with all their medical expenses.

¹ Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2013

Allowable Medical Expenses

Consumers may use many different types of costs to count towards their medical expenses. Bills received, or expected to be received, for a wide range of services should be counted by IDHS staff, including (but not limited to):

- Medical and dental care.
- Psychotherapy and rehabilitation services.
- Hospitalization or outpatient treatment.
- Nursing care, nursing home care, group home services, and Support Living Facility services.
- Prescribed medication.
- Cost of medical supplies and prescribed equipment.
- Most insurance policy premiums.
- Pay-in Spenddown payments.
- Dentures, hearing aids, and prosthetics.
- Prescribed eyeglasses.
- Maintenance of an attendant, homemaker, home health aide, housekeeper, or child care provider.
- Transportation and/or lodging to obtain needed medical treatment or services.
- Maintenance of trained service animals.
- Physician charges for medical or insurance reports.

Transportation

IDHS Policy states that “reasonable cost of transportation and/or lodging to obtain needed medical treatment or services ” is an allowable medical expense. This includes public transportation costs, PACE, and private car.

IDHS Policy 13-01-05-a further clarifies that when the unit’s car is used for medical transportation then the allowable rate is 24¢ per mile.

The only instance in which transportation to receive medical services shall not be considered an allowable expense is when that expense is clearly unreasonable.

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