Why Medicaid Matters

Medicaid is a health insurance program for low-income adults, children, and some people with disabilities or significant medical conditions. Jointly funded and operated by the federal government and the states, Medicaid provides affordable basic health care services, chronic condition care, and long term services and supports to millions of Americans, including many with epilepsy – helping them live meaningful, healthy, and productive lives.

Medicaid provides health care coverage for 74 million Americans

One-third of people with epilepsy rely on Medicaid

Medicaid’s cost per adult is 27% lower than in the private market

Issue Highlight: Medicaid and Medicare Dual-Eligibility

Fast Facts

• More than 10.7 million Americans are dual-eligibles (enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid).

• While Medicaid primarily serves low-income Americans and those with special health care needs, Medicare enrollment is open to nearly all seniors and some people with permanent disabilities.

• Medicaid provides a critical health backstop for dual-eligible individuals, covering services that Medicare does not provide and helping patients pay for Medicare premiums and cost-sharing. Without Medicaid, many dual-eligibles would struggle to afford Medicare’s out-of-pocket costs.

• The dual-eligible population includes both low-income seniors (59% of dual eligibles) and low-income non-seniors with permanent disabilities (41% of dual eligibles). 20% of dual eligibles have three or more chronic conditions.

• Since 2006, the dual-eligible population has increased by more than 24%. Enrollment is expected to continue rising as low-income Medicaid beneficiaries age into Medicare eligibility.

Steffany’s Story

Steffany, 36, from New Mexico, lives with epilepsy, fibromyalgia, and several other chronic conditions. She takes twelve medications, including one for epilepsy, and uses a vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) device for seizure control.

Steffany is enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid, qualifying as a dual-eligible because of her low income and health conditions.

Medicaid helps Steffany afford Medicare premiums, and covers the cost of co-pays and cost-sharing for specialist visits. To live well with epilepsy and fibromyalgia, Steffany visits multiple specialists each week. Without Medicare and Medicaid, Steffany’s medical costs would reach thousands of dollars per month. Steffany is grateful for Medicaid’s financial support. She says “If I didn’t have Medicaid picking up my co-pays and premiums, [health care] would be hard to afford.”