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: Supplemental Medicaid for Children with Special Health Needs

Fast Facts

• 36.8 million children have health insurance coverage through Medicaid. While children account for 48% of Medicaid enrollment, they comprise only 21% of costs.

• Medicaid/CHIP covers 39% of children nationwide and 44% of children with special health needs.

• While most families have employer-sponsored insurance, cost-sharing and co-pays can still make the cost of care for a child with special health care needs unaffordable. More than one-third of insured children report having inadequate insurance coverage and unmet medical needs. For nearly one million of these children, public insurance programs (Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP), provide a critical backstop.

• 49 states disregard parental income and assets when determining a child’s eligibility for Medicaid, recognizing that the cost of high-need care can be unaffordable even for children in high-income families.

• Studies show that childhood Medicaid/CHIP enrollment contributes to improvements in school performance, reduces early adulthood mortality, and increases future wages.

Kyleigh’s Story

Kyleigh, 9, from Iowa, experiences near-daily seizures. Even though she receives health insurance through her father’s employer, her family still relies on supplemental Medicaid to afford the out-of-pocket costs for her medical appointments, prescription drugs, and therapy. Without Medicaid, Kyleigh’s out-of-pocket medical costs would easily reach thousands of dollars a month.

Kyleigh’s mother, Tiffany, says that “Medicaid helps my family find doctors that actually understand Kyleigh’s needs, without wondering how we’re going to pay for them. In March and April, we had 16 doctor’s appointments. We would be filing for bankruptcy if we didn’t have Medicaid.”