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 Long-Term Services and Supports

Fast Facts

- More than four million Americans with disabilities or chronic conditions depend on Medicaid to provide long-term services and supports (LTSS) for medical care and daily tasks like bathing and dressing. As the population ages, the number of people requiring LTSS is expected to increase.

- Medicaid-funded LTSS are provided in institutional settings (including nursing homes) and through home and community-based services (HCBS).

- Without Medicaid, few families would be able to afford the full cost of LTSS, which averages more than $17,000 per user for HCBS and nearly $30,000 per user for institutional services.

- HCBS allow many individuals to live independently or semi-independently in their communities. By providing home-based support, HCBS free caregivers to return to the workforce.

- While federal law requires states to cover institutional care, HCBS services are considered “optional.” If Medicaid funding decreases, many states will cut HCBS spending first, reducing community care options.

Christopher’s Story

Christopher, 23, from New York, lives with intractable epilepsy and relies on a vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) device and three medications to control his seizures during the day. At night, he needs constant observation from someone who can respond to his seizures and prevent the onset of SUDEP (Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy).

For 18 years, Christopher’s mother, Claudia, was his constant caregiver. With Christopher’s medical needs, Claudia was unable to work, and the family struggled to survive on one income.

At age 18, Christopher enrolled in Medicaid, which transformed his family’s life. He now receives professional home care seven days a week and financial assistance with medication. Claudia says “These services are so vitally important. There’s no way we would let our child go without care, but Medicaid has done a tremendous amount to lessen the burden. Medicaid is why I’m able to work now.”