



## Talking Points to Defend Medicaid

### Why is Medicaid Important for State and Local Economies?

- Medicaid cuts will increase the rates of uncompensated care around the country, forcing health care providers, and especially rural providers, who are already in the red to close their doors.
- Federal Medicaid funds are the largest source of federal funding in states' budgets, financing around one-fifth of states' total spending.
- The various cuts on the table, such as [work requirements](#), [per capita caps](#), or [cutting the federal match rate \(FMAP\)](#) (whether for Medicaid expansion alone or across the program as a whole) will cause huge holes in state budgets that states cannot possibly make up through other revenue sources. States would then be forced to cut coverage, some services, or both.

### What's Wrong with Work Requirements?

- Work requirements are Medicaid cuts by another name. They cut federal Medicaid funding for states by triggering massive coverage losses.
- Most working-age Medicaid enrollees who can work already do, and work requirements don't improve employment.
- [Decades of evidence](#) from public benefit programs show that work requirement exemptions and carve-outs for certain populations (e.g., for pregnancy, people with disabilities, parents, or people experiencing domestic violence) don't work, tripping people up and punishing them for falling by cutting off their health insurance.
- Waste millions on needless red tape and bureaucracy instead of health care.
- Will drastically increase uncompensated care, causing more labor and delivery units and other providers to shut their doors, especially in rural communities. 46% of rural hospitals are already in the red nationwide.

## Why is Medicaid Important for Maternal and Child Health?

### Medicaid Improves Maternal Health Outcomes

- Medicaid covers 41% of U.S. births and more than half of births in rural communities.
- The U.S. is the most dangerous place to give birth. It's particularly dangerous for people with disabilities, who are 11x more likely to die from pregnancy than non-disabled people, and for Black and Indigenous people, who are 3 and 2 times more likely to die from pregnancy than white people.
- In the midst of high maternal mortality and morbidity rates, Medicaid has been a lifeline for birthing people and their families.
- Medicaid expansion has been crucial in fighting maternal mortality and morbidity rates by increasing access to care during the pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, and postpartum periods. Numerous studies show expansion improves maternal, infant, and child health outcomes.

### Medicaid Improves Child Health Outcomes

- Research has shown that early access to Medicaid during childhood yields better long-term health and educational outcomes through adulthood.
- Medicaid automatically enrolls the infants of enrollees into the program upon birth, and maintains continuous coverage for that infant's first year.
- Research has shown that early access to Medicaid during childhood yields better long-term health and educational outcomes through adulthood.
- When parents have health insurance, their children are more likely to have coverage.
- Medicaid covers critical health services that children may receive at school, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy; hearing and vision screenings; behavioral health services; and personal care and aide services.

### Medicaid Cuts Will Devastate Maternal and Child Health

- If Congress's proposed Medicaid cuts go through, they will trigger coverage losses for millions, exacerbating our maternal health crisis and hurting children and families.
  - States will be forced to slash Medicaid eligibility and services, exacerbating the maternal health crisis and hurting access to care for children.
  - For example, states may be forced to unwind Medicaid expansion or pregnancy Medicaid eligibility extensions, which have been key to fighting the U.S. maternal mortality epidemic and improving child health outcomes.
  - They may also slash optional benefits, such as prescription drug coverage, home and community-based services that help keep families together, coverage for breast and cervical cancer treatment, and optional pregnancy services (such as childbirth and parenting classes, doula services, and dental services).

- We are already seeing an alarming increase in closures of maternity care units as well as labor and delivery wings, especially in rural communities. Medicaid cuts will cause these closures to swell.
  - In many parts of the country, people must drive hours to access maternity care, exacerbating pregnancy risks.
  - Any threats to Medicaid, including cuts to programs, services, or spending, will exacerbate existing problems with the shortage of Medicaid providers, including those that provide maternal health care and care for infants and children.

### How does Attacking Medicaid Expansion Hurt Non-Expansion States?

- Even if cuts solely target the Medicaid expansion population, the impacts of these cuts would be felt by families in non-expansion states as well.
- Many individuals living near state borders rely on health care providers or hospitals in neighboring expansion states. The proposed Medicaid cuts would drive up uncompensated care, and could force those providers to close, affecting both Medicaid enrollees and other health care consumers across state lines.
- Reduced economic activity in expansion states would ripple outwards, affecting the economy.

### Why is Medicaid Important for Sexual and Reproductive Health?

NOTE: These talking points are for progressive members of Congress who are sexual and reproductive health champions. These members are likely already supporting Medicaid defense. These talking points should not be used with moderates or members on the right, who may oppose SRH care.

- Attempts to cut Medicaid through work requirements and other mechanisms will only serve to further efforts to all-but-eliminate sexual and reproductive health care access in the United States.
- Medicaid covers one in five women and 1.2 million LGBTQI+ adults, many of whom are people of color, young people, or people with disabilities.
- As the cornerstone of publicly funded family planning care for decades, Medicaid provides essential coverage for preventive services like contraception, cancer screenings, as well STI testing and treatment.
- Medicaid is also the leading source of coverage for people with HIV, and Medicaid expansion has been particularly critical in making progress toward ending the HIV epidemic.
- States might also attempt to restrict benefits, such as overturning the long-standing prohibition on cost-sharing for family planning, narrowing coverage of maternal health services, or dropping or setting limits on prescription drug coverage.