

# The Disability and Aging Collaborative &



February 11, 2025

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC

Dear Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned members of the Disability and Aging Collaborative (DAC), the Health and Long-Term Services and Supports Task Forces of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD), and allied organizations write to **urge you to exclude Medicaid cuts, work requirements, or any changes that limit funding or eligibility, from budget reconciliation or other legislation.** People with disabilities, older adults, family caregivers and their children, direct care workers, and other low-income individuals and families depend on Medicaid every day for their health, safety, and independence. Medicaid enables our communities to go to work and to care for their loved ones. It is our communities' lifeline, and we cannot afford for any part of it to be cut.

We are deeply concerned about recent statements from some Congressional leadership supporting proposals that would deeply cut Medicaid funding. Medicaid is already lean and efficient. Funding cuts, caps, or changes that limit eligibility for or make it harder to enroll in or maintain coverage threaten the longstanding Medicaid guarantee for people with disabilities, older adults and their families. Medicaid is critical not only as primary coverage for health care, it is also the primary payer for long-term services and supports (LTSS) that support people with disabilities and older adults. Furthermore, cuts to Medicaid are cuts to Medicare, as Medicaid protects low-income people with Medicare from deep poverty by helping with their out-of-pocket costs and covering benefits that Medicare does not, including dental, vision, hearing and non-emergency medical transportation.

For many people with disabilities and older adults, accessing timely needed care is a life or death matter and Medicaid is the only program that can meet their needs. We strongly oppose Medicaid cuts in any form, whether it is done by imposing work requirements, repealing the eligibility and enrollment rule, imposing spending caps on states, cutting the federal medical assistance

percentage (FMAP), or further limiting the way states fund their share of Medicaid costs. These proposals all lead to the same result: people with disabilities and older adults will lose care and support that keep them healthy and independent.

## Cutting Medicaid by Making It Harder to Enroll and Keep Coverage

### *Work Requirements*

Work requirements take away coverage from people who are eligible for Medicaid and have no other insurance options, including people with disabilities, older adults, their caregivers, and direct care workers. Such requirements do not increase employment but instead create costly red tape that puts people with disabilities at particular risk of losing coverage<sup>1</sup> and waste millions of dollars<sup>2</sup> that could be used to provide additional Medicaid services or other employment supports such as affordable child care and aging and disability care.

Most working age adults enrolled in Medicaid already work. Many of those not doing paid work are either caregivers or persons with chronic conditions or disabilities (who might either be temporarily unable to work or require supportive services to find and keep a job). Furthermore, Medicaid helps people with disabilities work, by providing them with health care and other important employment supports, such as rehabilitative and habilitative services. People with disabilities, older adults, and their caregivers cannot be effectively “carved out” of work requirements, and will be inevitably harmed. Exemption processes are complicated, expensive, and fundamentally flawed.<sup>3</sup> Identifying exactly what qualifies as a disability, ensuring that people know how to request an exemption, and creating an accessible pathway to receive such an exemption has proven both misguided and unworkable.

The administrative burden on states also wastes millions that could have gone to cover health care services or dependent care that actually helps people work. Even worse, as Georgia’s experience demonstrates, work requirements delay access to care for *all* Medicaid enrollees. Not only does this red tape prevent thousands of people with disabilities and caregivers from using Medicaid, it also slows down application processing across the program, as well as enrollment in other key anti-poverty programs, like SNAP, that older adults and people with disabilities rely on.<sup>4</sup>

### *Ending Policies that Streamline Eligibility and Enrollment*

Newly enacted policies are removing bureaucratic hurdles that are costly for states to administer and make it difficult for older adults and people with disabilities who are eligible for Medicaid to get and keep coverage. For example, repealing the Streamlining Eligibility and Enrollment Rule would allow states to cut people with disabilities and older adults off Medicaid by requiring more frequent eligibility determinations and eliminating protections for continuous coverage. It would also make it harder to access HCBS for people who have to deduct their out-of-pocket expenses to

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<sup>1</sup>David Machledt, NHeLP, “Unfit” to Work? How Medicaid Work Requirements Hurt People with Disabilities (Dec. 2024), <https://healthlaw.org/resource/unfit-to-work-how-medicaid-work-requirements-hurt-people-with-disabilities-2/>.

<sup>2</sup>Andy Miller & Renuka Rayasam, KFF Health News, “Georgia’s Medicaid Work Requirements Costing Taxpayers Millions Despite Low Enrollment” (March 20, 2024), <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/georgia-medicaid-work-requirements-experiment-high-cost-low-enrollment/>

<sup>3</sup>*Id.*; Kali Grant et al., *Unworkable & Unwise: Conditioning Access to Programs that Ensure a Basic Foundation for Families on Work Requirements*, 43 (2019), <https://www.georgetownpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Unworkable-Unwise-20190201.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup>KFF Health News, Georgia’s Work Requirement Slows Processing of Applications for Medicaid, Food Stamps (Dec. 5, 2024), <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/georgia-work-requirement-medicaid-food-stamps/>.

qualify, leading to worse health outcomes and costlier care in the future. Taking away people's health care through red tape is never acceptable and we oppose repeal of the Streamlining rule or any other measures that protect access to Medicaid.

## Cutting Medicaid Funding Will Harm People with Disabilities and Older Adults

### *Per Capita Caps or Block Grants*

Limiting federal Medicaid spending through per capita caps or block grants would shift costs to states, creating huge holes in state budgets. This would likely force states to reduce or eliminate coverage and services for people with the highest cost needs: older adults and people with disabilities who need long-term services and supports. Medicaid enrollees who rely on LTSS comprise only 6% of Medicaid enrollees, but use 37% of Medicaid expenditures.<sup>5</sup> The result would be devastating cuts to the programs low-income older adults and people with disabilities rely on.

- **Cuts to home and community-based services (HCBS).** States are likely to cut HCBS first when facing reduced budgets because Medicaid law does not require most HCBS to be covered. States could eliminate HCBS programs altogether or reduce waiver slots, meaning more people on waitlists for longer periods of time. These cuts put over 7 million people with disabilities and older adults at risk of not getting the support they need to live in the community and will harm their health. Cuts to HCBS also harm families who have to reduce hours or leave their jobs to care for loved ones.
- **Harm to nursing facility residents.** Two-thirds of people living in nursing facilities rely on Medicaid. If federal funding is cut, access to and quality of nursing facility care would be jeopardized. Many older adults with long-term care needs would be left with limited—and, in some cases, no other comparable options—as states will be unable to fill the funding gap and nursing facilities will close.
- **Worsening workforce shortages.** States will also have to cut provider rates to make up for funding losses. This will greatly exacerbate the direct care workforce shortage, making it even harder to access HCBS and putting nursing facility residents at risk of harm from insufficient staffing.
- **Taking away coverage.** States could respond to funding cuts by tightening eligibility criteria and setting enrollment caps on additional programs. These cuts would harm older adults and people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid for their own health and long-term care, as well as their families, friends, and caregivers—both paid and unpaid.

Future Medicaid cuts would be far easier to make, by simply dialing down or freezing federal spending growth rates from year to year, if the federal financing structure is capped.

### *Cutting the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP)*

Whether eliminating the enhanced FMAP for Medicaid Expansion or removing the federal minimum match of 50% for all states, the result of cutting the federal government's share of Medicaid costs and shifting the burden to states would be devastating for people with disabilities and older adults. As with caps and block grants, states would have less money in their budgets and be forced to cut HCBS, tighten eligibility, and reduce provider payments. Furthermore, several

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<sup>5</sup> Priya Chidambaram and Alice Burns, KFF, *How Many People Use Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports and How Much Does Medicaid Spend on Those People?* (Aug. 14, 2023), <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/how-many-people-use-medicaid-long-term-services-and-supports-and-how-much-does-medicaid-spend-on-those-people/>.

states would automatically end their Medicaid Expansion<sup>6</sup>, taking away coverage from millions of people with disabilities and chronic conditions, older adults, and paid and unpaid caregivers who do not qualify for other Medicaid categories and have no other source of health insurance.

### *Restricting How States Fund Their Share of Medicaid Costs*

States use a variety of revenues to maximize their ability to meet the Medicaid needs of their state. Every state uses provider and insurer taxes -- they are and have been integral to Medicaid funding for decades. Further restricting allowable provider taxes or other revenue sources would create huge budget deficits for states. As with any Medicaid funding cut, the only way states can respond is by taking away coverage and services. HCBS and other services that people with disabilities and older adults rely on will be the first on the chopping block.

### **Conclusion**

Access to Medicaid is a matter of life, death, and independence for millions of Americans with disabilities, older adults, and their families and friends. **We strongly oppose per capita caps, block grants, work requirements, restrictions on eligibility, barriers to enrollment and any other cuts or harmful changes to the Medicaid program.** The result is the same: taking away coverage from people with disabilities, older adults, and others who cannot otherwise afford health care and long-term services and supports. We will oppose cuts in every form because they will all harm people with disabilities and older adults. If you have any questions, contact Nicole Jorwic, [nicole@caringacross.org](mailto:nicole@caringacross.org); Natalie Kean, [nkean@justiceinaging.org](mailto:nkean@justiceinaging.org); Jennifer Lav, [lav@healthlaw.org](mailto:lav@healthlaw.org); and Elise Aguilar, [eaguilar@ancor.org](mailto:eaguilar@ancor.org).

Sincerely,

### **109 National Organizations:**

ACA Consumer Advocacy

Access Care Anywhere

Access Ready Inc.

ACLU

ADA Watch/Coalition for Disability Rights & Justice (CDRJ)

ADAPT National

AFT: Education, Healthcare, Public Services

Allies for Independence

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Association on Health and Disability

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Foundation for the Blind

American Geriatrics Society

American Music Therapy Association

American Network of Community Options and Resources

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

American Therapeutic Recreation Association

Amputee Coalition

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<sup>6</sup>Adam Searing, Georgetown CCF, *Federal Funding Cuts to Medicaid May Trigger Automatic Loss of Health Coverage for Millions of Residents of Certain States* (Nov. 27, 2024). <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2024/11/27/federal-funding-cuts-to-medicaid-may-trigger-automatic-loss-of-health-coverage-for-millions-of-residents-of-certain-states/#71ded725-43af-4bad-9cc0-f88522f80725>

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Assistive Technology Law Center  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Autism Society of America  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Care in Action  
Caring Across Generations  
Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
Center for Public Representation  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
Coalition on Human Needs  
CommunicationFIRST  
Community Catalyst  
Community Change Action  
CSH  
Disability Belongs  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)  
Diverse Elders Coalition  
Doctors for America  
DQIA Disabled Queers In Action  
Epilepsy Foundation of America  
Families USA  
Family Caregiver Alliance, National Center on Caregiving  
Family Values @ Work  
Family Values@Work Action  
Gerontological Society of America  
GO2 for Lung Cancer  
Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network  
Health Care for America Now (HCAN)  
Huntington's Disease Society of America  
IEC (Institute for Exceptional Care)  
Justice in Aging  
Lakeshore Foundation  
LeadingAge  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Legal Action Center  
Little Lobbyists  
Lutheran Services in America  
MEAction  
Meals on Wheels America  
Medicare Rights Center  
MomsRising  
Muscular Dystrophy Association

NASTAD

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Alliance for Caregiving

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs

National Center for Disability, Equity, and Intersectionality

National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

National Council of Jewish Women

National Council on Aging

National Council on Independent Living

National Disability Institute

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Domestic Workers Alliance

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Health Law Program

National Partnership for Women & Families

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

National Women's Law Center

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Network of Occupational Therapy Practitioners with Disabilities and Supporters (NOTPD)

New Disabled South

OT Leaders and Legacies Society

PHI

Service Employees International Union

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

Supermajority

The Arc of the United States

The Kelsey

Touch the Future Inc

Tourette Association of America

Triage Cancer

UnidosUS

Union for Reform Judaism

United Spinal Association

Upturn

USAging

VOR - A Voice Of Reason

Well Spouse Association

Wilson Clinical Services, PLLC.

World Institute on Disability

Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

## **265+ State and Local Organizations:**

### **Alabama**

Alabama Disability Advocacy Program (ADAP)

### **Alaska**

907 Initiative

Access Alaska, Inc.

Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities

Christians for Equality

Disability Law Center of Alaska

Governors Council on Disabilities and Special Education

Hope Community Resources

Independent Living Center

Peer peer

Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Inc. (SAIL)

Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska

Stone Soup Group

The Alaska Christian Conference

### **Arizona**

Ability360

Arizona Autism Coalition

Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Care 4 the Caregivers

Disability Rights Arizona

Raising Special Kids

The Arc of Arizona

The Arc of Tempe

The Opportunity Tree

William E. Morris Institute for Justice

### **Arkansas**

Spa Area Independent Living Services

### **California**

AJL Community Health

Alzheimer's Los Angeles

Archstone Foundation

California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform

California Alliance for Retired Americans

California Association for Adult Day Services

California Coverage & Health Initiatives

California Elder Justice Coalition

California Foundation for Independent Living Centers

California Health Advocates

California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association (CLTCOA)

California PACE Association

Center For Independence of Individuals with Disabilities

Choice in Aging

Courage California

CRLA Foundation

Disability Rights California  
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant  
Equality California  
Family Caregiver Alliance, National Center on Caregiving  
Family Voices of California  
FREED Center for Independent Living  
Gray Panthers of San Francisco  
Helping Hands ADP  
Indivisible Marin  
LeadingAge California  
Legal Assistance for Seniors  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Marin Center for Independent Living  
Meals on Wheels California  
NorCal Coalition for Social Connection  
Northeast Valley Health Corporation  
Placer Independent Resource Services  
San Diegans for Healthcare Coverage  
Senior and Disability Action  
Senior Coastsiders  
Sonrisas Dental Health  
Stanford Settlement, Inc.  
Support for Families of Children with Disabilities  
The Children's Partnership  
The Public Interest Law Project  
UDW/AFSCME Local 3930  
We Are Not Invisible  
Western Center on Law and Poverty

**Colorado**

Center for People with Disabilities  
Colorado Center on Law and Policy  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council  
El Grupo Vida, Inc.  
Family Voices Colorado  
PEAK Parent Center  
Show and Tell  
The Independence Center

**Connecticut**

Disability Rights Connecticut  
PATH CT

**District of Columbia**

Bread for the City

**Delaware**

LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware

**Florida**

Florida Health Justice Project



**Georgia**

9to5 GA  
Georgia ADAPT  
Georgia Values Action  
Indivisible Georgia Coalition  
Inspire Positivity Inc  
New Georgia Project Action Fund  
Walton Options for Independent Living

**Hawaii**

Catholic Charities Hawaii  
Elderly Affairs Division (Oahu - AAA)  
Executive Office on Aging  
Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition  
Hawaii Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program  
Hawaii Meals on Wheels  
Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities

**Idaho**

Disability Rights Idaho  
Idaho Anti-trafficking Coalition  
Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Idaho State Independent Living Council

**Illinois**

Access Living  
Disability Resource Center  
EHDOC-J Michael Fitzgerald LP Apartments  
Going Home Coalition - The Arc of Illinois  
Great Lakes ADA Center  
Health Justice Project  
Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities  
IMPACT CIL  
Legal Council for Health Justice  
Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters  
The Arc of Illinois  
The Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois  
Trellus

**Indiana**

Center for At Risk Elders  
Future Choices Inc  
Great Lakes ADA Center

**Iowa**

Disability Rights Iowa  
Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council

**Kansas**

Families Together Inc./Family to Family Health Information Center  
Keys for Networking  
SKIL

**Kentucky**

Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Kentucky Protection and Advocacy

**Louisiana**

Bayou Land Families Helping Families  
Families Helping Families of Acadiana

**Maine**

Disability Rights Maine  
Maine Council on Aging  
Maine Developmental Disabilities Council  
Maine Equal Justice  
Maine Parent Federation

**Maryland**

Accessible Resources for Independence, Inc.  
Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council  
Public Justice Center  
The Arc Maryland  
The Freedom Center  
The Parents' Place of MD  
Voices of Hope - Maryland

**Massachusetts**

Boston Center for Independent Living  
Community Servings  
Disability Law Center (MA)  
Disability Policy Consortium  
Federation for Children with Special Needs  
Health Care For All (HCFA)  
Health Law Advocates  
Independence Associates  
LifePath  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
MassADAPT  
MetroWest Center for Independent Living

**Michigan**

Center for Civil Justice  
Detroit Disability Power  
Disability Rights Michigan  
Great Lakes ADA Center  
Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute  
Michigan United  
The Arc Grosse Pointe Harper Woods  
The Arc Michigan  
The Arc of Macomb County, Inc.

**Minnesota**

Children's Minnesota  
Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Great Lakes ADA Center

Lifeworks Services, Inc.  
North Star Policy Consulting  
Reach for Resources  
Upstream Arts, Inc.

**Mississippi**

Mississippi Center for Justice

**Missouri**

Empower Missouri  
Heartland Independent Living Center  
Independent Living Center of Southeast Missouri  
Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC)  
Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council  
NorthEast Independent Living Services  
On My Own, Inc.  
Paraquad  
Pioneer House  
Rural Advocates for Independent Living, Inc.  
Southwest Center for Independent Living dba empower: abilities

**Montana**

ADAPT Montana

**Nebraska**

Ollie Webb Center, Inc.

**Nevada**

Silver State Equality

**New Hampshire**

NH Legal Assistance

**New Jersey**

Association for Special Children and Families  
Disability Rights New Jersey  
Family Voices NJ  
LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware  
New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities  
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network  
The Arc of New Jersey

**New Mexico**

Centro Savila  
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty  
Parents Reaching Out

**New York**

Center for Elder Law & Justice  
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families  
Families On The Move of NYC, Inc.  
Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc.  
New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)  
The Mediation Offices of Eric A. Deutsch

**North Carolina**

Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy

Disability Rights North Carolina  
NC Statewide Independent Living Council  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Pisgah Legal Services

**North Dakota**

North Dakota DD Council  
North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project

**Ohio**

Great Lakes ADA Center  
Linking Employment, Abilities & Potential (LEAP)  
Mid Ohio Board for an Independent Living Environment  
Ohio Olmstead Task Force  
Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council  
The Ability Center of Greater Toledo

**Oklahoma**

Oklahoma Policy Institute  
The Arc of Oklahoma

**Oregon**

FACT Oregon  
Unite Oregon

**Pennsylvania**

Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of Elders (CARIE)  
Community Legal Services of Philadelphia  
Disability Pride Pennsylvania  
Disability Rights Pennsylvania  
Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center  
Pennsylvania Health Law Project  
Transitional Paths to Independent Living  
Voices for Independence

**Rhode Island**

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition RI  
RIPIN

**South Carolina**

Able South Carolina, Inc.  
Brain Injury Association of South Carolina  
Disability Rights South Carolina  
Family Connection of South Carolina  
NAACP South Carolina State Conference of Branches  
NAMI South Carolina  
Northeast Columbia Empowerment Coalition (NECEC)  
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
South Carolinians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (SCADP)  
South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Association  
Walton Options for Independent Living

**South Dakota**

Disability Rights South Dakota  
South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities

**Tennessee**

Disability Rights Tennessee  
Family Voices of Tennessee  
Tennessee Disability Coalition  
Tennessee Justice Center

**Texas**

ADAPT of Texas  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
Disability Rights Texas  
Every Body Texas  
Every Texan  
Latino Texas Policy Center  
Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas  
REV UP Texas  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Parent to Parent  
Woori Juntos

**Utah**

Disability Law Center of Utah  
Utah Developmental Disabilities Council  
Utah Statewide Independent Living Council

**Vermont**

Vermont Center for Independent Living

**Virginia**

ElderAwareness  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

**Washington**

Center For Independence  
PAVE

**West Virginia**

Cabin Creek Health Systems  
West Virginia Citizen Action Group  
West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council  
WV FREE (WV Focus: Reproductive Education and Equity)

**Wisconsin**

Access to Independence  
Disability Rights Wisconsin  
Employment Resources Inc  
Great Lakes ADA Center  
Independence First  
People First Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

**Wyoming**

LeadingAge Wyoming