



Federal Issues and Action Alerts

National Medicaid Policy Directly Impacts Oregonians with Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities

The Oregon IDD Coalition believes that our nation is strongest when all people have the supports they needs to be healthy and safe as members of their community.

National Medicaid policy directly impacts the programs that Oregonians with IDD depend on for support in the community because these programs are funded with state and federal dollars.

At the federal level, Congress and the new administration are talking about cutting and restructuring Medicaid with block grants or per capita caps. These proposals would give Oregon a limited amount of money to support the growing population of people who depend on Medicaid to live and work in their communities.

They are also working to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act created the K Plan which thousands of Oregonians with IDD use every day. These proposals will have an impact on Oregon's ability to fund supports for people with IDD - and therefore will impact the lives of Oregonians with IDD.

What does Medicaid do for Oregonians with IDD?

Medicaid is a state and federal partnership that funds two major initiatives:

- Health care (the Oregon Health Plan); and
- Long-term care services that help people live in their communities (like employment supports or attendant care under the K Plan).

Medicaid health insurance and long-term care cover over 25,000 Oregonian adults and children with IDD who use IDD services.

How is Medicaid paid for now?

Medicaid pays for health care and disability related supports so people can live and work in their communities. If you are on Medicaid, you are entitled to services that you need when you need them.

Oregon gets federal dollars to help pay for your services. Depending on the type of service, the federal government pays up to 70% of the cost of the service. To get the federal money, Oregon guarantees that it will follow the federal Medicaid rules.

Currently, if the cost of your services goes up, the federal dollars go up to help cover those services.

What are the Medicaid changes discussed at the federal level?

Nothing is final, but Congress is talking about two ways to limit how much federal money comes to states for Medicaid services:

Block Grants: Oregon would get a pot of dollars to spend on Medicaid that is smaller than it gets now. Oregon could not ask for more federal money if people's needs go up, if more people need services or if costs increase. This means that Oregon would have to cover these increased costs without federal help or reduce how many services or people are covered or start wait lists.

Per Capita Caps: Oregon would get an amount of federal dollars for each person covered by Medicaid. There could be one cost for all people or there could be costs for each population covered (like people with disabilities). The per person cost would go up each year slower than costs go up now. This means the federal dollars would cover less as time goes on leaving Oregon to cover more.

Why should we be concerned about Block Grants or Per Capita Caps?

With less federal money for Medicaid, Oregon will have to pick up more of the costs. Oregon currently has a \$1.8 billion dollar budget shortfall. It is unlikely that Oregon would be able to increase Medicaid spending cover more of the costs of Medicaid. This means Oregon may have to revise provider rates, change eligibility for who can get services, which services they can get and how much of a service they can have. Oregon may even have to start wait lists for needed services.

How does the Affordable Care Act help Oregonians with IDD?

The Affordable Care Act improved access to health insurance and long-term care services for thousands of Oregonians. It also created the Community First Choice Option (K Plan) which has opened the door to thousands of Oregonians with disabilities to have the supports they need to be healthy and safe in our communities - and our communities are stronger because of this.

A few highlights of the Affordable Care Act include:

- Coverage: ends preexisting condition exclusions so plans can no longer limit or deny benefits to you because you have a chronic condition that started before you got the insurance.
- **Costs:** ends lifetime limits on benefits so plans cannot set a limit to how much they will pay in benefits for you.
- Care: Preventive care is covered at no cost to you.
- Long-term care: Created the Community First Choice Option (K Plan) which may help you by:
 - Providing attendant care Having someone to support you at home and to access and participate in your community.
 - Increasing support for children with IDD Families of children with IDD can now get supports they need so they can successfully raise their children at home together without using expensive crisis or out of home placements.
 - Home modifications To make your home more accessible so you can stay in your home without sacrificing your independence to move into more costly care.

In the four years that Oregonians have used the K Plan, it has brought in an additional

\$350 million dollars in federal money to Oregon. To learn more about how the Affordable Care Act impacts Oregonians, please read the <u>fact sheet</u> published by the Oregon Office of Developmental Disability Services.

Why is advocacy at the federal level of government important?

There are discussions about repealing the Affordable Care Act at the federal level. If the federal funds brought into Oregon through the Affordable Care Act go away, it would be devastating for people's services.

If Congress moves forward with repealing the Affordable Care Act, disability advocates would like to see a replacement that gives equal or better access to affordable, quality health and long-term care supports.

How You Can Help:

Tell your story to our federal Senators and House Members! They need to know how Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act help you be a member of your community so they can advocate for you in Washington DC. Follow our guide below to write a short but powerful letter to your federal Senators and House Members.



Share how Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) help you be a community member! Even if you called your legislator's office, please write to them today!

WHAT IS AT STAKE?



Oregon is strongest when all people have supports to be community members

Medicaid and ACA changes may mean less services for people with disabilities to live and work in their community

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR

You can find out how to contact your U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators at usa.gov/elected-officials



TELL YOUR STORY!

Tell your legislators who you are, how you use Medicaid and how cuts will impact your life.



KEEP IT SHORT & DIRECT

Keep it to one page. It should only take one or two minutes to read your letter outloud.

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

My name is ____ and I am a constituent.
I don't want changes to Medicaid and the ACA because I depend on these services everyday.



Because of Medicaid, I have health care and supports to live and work in my community. For example, I use my services

If I don't have these supports, my life will be harder because _____. Please don't change Medicaid or the ACA.

EMAIL ADDRESSES:

Your U.S. Senators:

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Find your U.S. Representatives contact info at usa.gov/elected-officials





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