

MEDICAID DOES WONDERS FOR AMERICA'S KIDS AND FAMILIES!



**STORIES FROM REAL
SUPERHEROES ABOUT HOW MEDICAID
POWERS OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

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Dear Member of Congress,

Medicaid is a wonder for kids and families! In the following pages you will see stories from moms and dads across the nation about how Medicaid is lifting up families, empowering them to work while caring for children with disabilities or elderly parents, and allowing people who were priced out of access to healthcare to finally get the medical treatment they need to keep them healthy and productive. Medicaid is critical for families and critical to our economy. Currently over 70 million people are covered by Medicaid, including 10 million people with disabilities. [1] Moms wrote us to tell us their their beloved children's lives literally depend on Medicaid.

"My daughter was born with Schizencephaly, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, she's legally blind, non-verbal, uses a wheelchair, and has a feeding tube. Her medications, feeding supplies, and medical equipment/supplies cost thousands every month. Her feeding supplies alone cost almost \$2,000, of which private insurance only covers a small portion. If she loses coverage and Medicaid is cut, she will die." - Stephanie in Toledo, OH

Medicaid is also critical for the health of low-income women and infants in our nation. This critical insurance program also covers nearly half of all births in the U.S., making sure new moms and their babies get the care that they need! [2]

"Without Medicaid, I wouldn't have been able to afford the birth of my daughter, or her health issues early in life. As someone who has always struggled with poverty, as well as everyone I know being impoverished, we rely on Medicaid for the most basic of medical care. Being unable to treat a simple infection or get a checkup for your child is something no one should deal with, especially in America." - Kelley in Council Bluffs, IA

These impacts would be particularly severe for women of color and women in rural areas. In fact, Medicaid has long played an even larger role in providing health coverage and paying for care in rural areas than in urban areas. Nearly 1.7 million rural Americans have newly gained coverage through the Medicaid expansion, many of them women. [3]

Medicaid also plays a critical role in helping ensure our nation's aging population receives the care and dignity that they deserve later in life, covering over 70% of nursing home patients. [4]

"I do not know what my family would have done without Medicaid when my mother was institutionalized with Alzheimer's disease. We private-paid for three years, and when she was broke, having spent everything she worked a lifetime for to sit wasting away in a nursing home, Medicaid picked up the tab for the last five years. What on earth would have happened to her without that support?" - Marilyn in Grand Junction, CO

The stories in this booklet represent a small portion of the over 70 million people who are covered by Medicaid, yet these personal stories reflect the widespread value and importance of the program for families across generations.

Listen to the voices of our nation's families and you'll hear from all across the country, from small towns to big cities
– Medicaid is a true wonder for kids and families.

If you have questions or would like to contact any of these individuals, please contact Felicia Willems at felicia@momsrising.org.

Sincerely,



Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner
Executive Director, MomsRising.org

[1] Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, "People with disabilities"

[2] Markus A. "Medicaid Covered Births, 2008 through 2010, in the Context of the Implementation of Health Reform" *Women's Health Issues*, 2013

[3] Jesse Cross-Call. "House-Passed Bill Would Devastate Health Care in Rural America" *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, May 16, 2017

[4] Julia Paradise. "Medicaid Moving Forward." *Kaiser Family Foundation*, March 9, 2015

INDEX OF STORIES BY STATE

ALABAMA.....	3	LOUISIANA.....	13	OKLAHOMA	22
ALASKA.....	3	MAINE.....	13	OREGON	22
ARIZONA.....	3	MARYLAND	14	PENNSYLVANIA.....	23
ARKANSAS.....	4	MASSACHUSETTS.....	14	RHODE ISLAND.....	24
CALIFORNIA.....	4	MICHIGAN.....	14	SOUTH CAROLINA.....	24
COLORADO	5	MINNESOTA.....	15	SOUTH DAKOTA.....	24
CONNECTICUT	7	MISSISSIPPI.....	16	TENNESSEE	24
DELAWARE	8	MISSOURI	16	TEXAS	24
FLORIDA	8	MONTANA.....	16	UTAH	25
GEORGIA.....	8	NEVADA	16	VERMONT	25
HAWAII.....	9	NEW HAMPSHIRE	17	VIRGINIA.....	26
IDAHO.....	9	NEW JERSEY.....	17	WASHINGTON.....	27
ILLINOIS	9	NEW MEXICO	17	WEST VIRGINIA.....	28
INDIANA.....	10	NEW YORK	18	WISCONSIN	29
IOWA.....	11	NORTH CAROLINA.....	19	WYOMING	29
KANSAS	12	NORTH DAKOTA	20		
KENTUCKY.....	12	OHIO.....	20		

PERSONAL STORIES FROM MOMSRISING MEMBERS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDICAID

ALABAMA

My daughters and grandkids depend on Medicaid for all their health care. I also have a mother, sister, niece and nephews that only have Medicaid. I'm not sure what my family will do because they have asthma and other serious illnesses.

– **Ava, Bessemer, AL**

My son and daughter-in-law could not survive without the Medicaid and health insurance subsidies they receive. Both have serious pre-existing conditions, conditions that will require monitoring and treatment for the rest of their days.

My son attends medical school and my daughter-in-law teaches part time, which generates a modest salary at best. But she has an infant daughter whom she cares for with enormous love and patience, and this takes a large commitment of time. (She is only able to do so because I moved from Florida to Alabama, where my kids live, in order to help raise my grandchild and, thus, relieve my kids of some of the stress, as well as free up some time for them.)

I retired after teaching in a private college for more than three decades. My pension is relatively modest, my savings small. Certainly, I could not afford to replace my children's health insurance.

– **Steven, Dothan, AL**

ALASKA

My husband was diagnosed with thyroid cancer five years ago. After two surgeries and two rounds of radiation he is still not cancer free. We have a seven year old son.

My husband deserves to get the health care he needs to keep his cancer from growing. My son deserves to grow up with a healthy father. My family deserves to not go bankrupt because of medical bills.

– **Chelsea, Anchorage, AK**

I am on Medicaid. Access to health care is a human right. It is shameful that the richest country in the world can not get it together enough to stop spending billions on making enemies by bombing civilians halfway around the world and start providing care for every person in the country.

– **David, Sitka, AK**

ARIZONA



Erika, Phoenix, AZ

I was born with cerebral palsy, a pre-existing condition that means I use a wheelchair and need help with most daily-living activities. Medicaid (well, AHCCCS here) pays for that help. Medicaid pays for my mom to be my attendant and makes it so she can help me and work fewer hours.

I was employed for twenty years by the Medicaid program in Arizona. It became clear that this was a necessity for the very (low & no) income citizens and also for the community in general. Most people don't know that Medicaid also covered long term care which assisted citizens who required nursing home residence.

– **Ann, Tucson, AZ**

I receive Medicaid. I have multiple sclerosis (MS). I also have Medicare and I am fortunate to live in a state that also allows me to have Medicaid along with Medicare. I could not afford to pay out-of-pocket expenses for the procedures, doctors and medications I take and I am grateful to have to help because I am on a very fixed income being on disability. My disease-modifying drug costs over \$5,000 a month!

– **Cheryl, Peoria, AZ**

My son, who barely survives on Social Security Disability, can now have skin cancer surgery, thanks to being on Medicaid. He has been waiting for over a year to get this very important surgery.

– **Judy, Tucson, AZ**

My son (mid 20s) started on pain pills and transitioned to heroin. We had some very bad years as a family, but eventually he got into a residential rehab, paid for by Medicaid. God knows he had no money, and we were pretty well tapped out by then, too, we couldn't have paid for it. He was there 6 months, and has been clean and sober now for over a year and a half. It saved his life.

– **L., Payson, AZ**

My daughter is receiving Medicaid after an abusive relationship left her unable to work to support herself. She needs Medicaid for mental health counseling, spinal surgery & medications for her migraines. It is a basic human trait to help others in a time of weakness, sickness, or need.

– **M., Payson, AZ**

In 2010 I became very ill, after six weeks in the hospital and 10 days in nursing home, I finally got to come home. Medicaid paid for saving my life! Very grateful to be alive!

– **Vickie, Mesa, AZ**

ARKANSAS

As a doctor you would think I never had need for assistance or Medicaid or food stamps – WRONG! I grew up in a family of 10 kids, all of whom went to college, all of whom are still working. We got “commodities”. In between college, med school, internship, and my certification to practice I used Medicaid (I had 3 children during Med School and spouse was disabled), and yes, even food stamps. As a doc, in a rural area of Arkansas nearly all my elderly Medicare patients utilize Medicaid for payment of Medicare premiums (their average Social Security is <\$600/month), and yes, in order to survive, get food stamps. My daughter with 3 kids who lost her spouse to cancer, is now going to school to be an RN - yes, the kids get Medicaid and food stamps. For many Americans these programs are stepping stones, something to tide them over, and for others like my elderly patients, life sustaining.

– **DO, Marianna, AR**

CALIFORNIA

My daughter has severe PTSD and depression. She attempted suicide more than once. Thanks to Medicare and MediCal (the California version of Medicaid) she was able to get effective treatment and is now comfortable with her continuing work to understand and improve her condition.

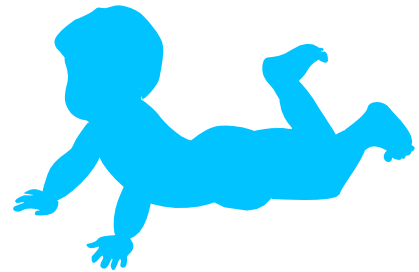
She is much better able to function and has not felt suicidal for more than 2 years. She reaches out to help others through online support groups. Without the care she received, she would not be here.

– **B., Sebastopol, CA**

My parents live independently in LA, on a very modest income left by savings accumulated over my father's lifetime as a doctor in an insurance-based hospital. My mother is 86; he is 91 and in the end stages of Alzheimer's. He is dying at home under the care of a hospice program supplied by Medicaid which has been transformational. It has given my mother support and peace of mind and allowed this gentle man the dignity of home care.

– **Catherine, Los Angeles, CA**

MEDICAID PROVIDES HEALTH COVERAGE FOR NEARLY HALF OF ALL BIRTHS IN THE UNITED STATES



SOURCE: <http://lkff.org/medicaid/fact-sheet/medicaid-pocket-primer/>

I discovered that I had a brain tumor on Sept 12th, 2016, and was taken by ambulance to San Francisco for emergency surgery. I had radiation for 6 weeks, oral chemo for 4; had to stop the chemo because it crashed my bone marrow. I am still undergoing treatment, and am waiting for my bone marrow to come back up. There is no way that I could pay for all of this; I am a senior, on Social Security. If I lost Medicare and MediCal, my chances of survival are extremely diminished.

My daughter discovered that she had breast cancer in May, 2016, and ended up having a bilateral radical mastectomy in July, 2016. I was her caretaker while she was recovering, for the whole month of August. She single parents an 8 year old daughter, so I cared for her as well. My daughter had reconstructive surgery last Fall. She has MediCal, for which I am eternally grateful. I couldn't bear losing her. A month after caretaking her, I discovered the brain tumor and ended up hospitalized locally because my Oncologist couldn't care for my crashed bone

marrow on an outpatient basis. Neither one of us is done with this.

– **Ellen, Ukiah, CA**

My brother-in-law is disabled and counts on his MediCal (the CA equivalent of Medicaid) and Medicare to cover his medical care. Right now, he's in Skilled Nursing rehab for a severe broken ankle and the other ankle is badly sprained.

He's been recovering for 2 months as he is unable to walk at all and could never manage a wheelchair in his tiny apartment. Without the MediCal to help pay for his care, we don't know how he would have been able to pay for his rehab for this length of time.

– **Barbara, Castroville, CA**

My mother-in-law lived 17 years after the death of her husband in 1995. She moved out of their house into an apartment, then assisted living. Finally for less than the last 6 months of her life she was on Medicaid to pay for the nursing

home. She had used all of her savings, \$500,000, and had no money left. She died at age 95 in 2012.

– **Karen, Palo Alto, CA**

I myself have personally been rescued by Medicaid! I am on Social Security Disability for severe heart failure, a condition that came from my pregnancy, which prevents me from working enough to make a living. It's been now 19 years, and since I was able to get assistance for the past several years from Medicaid, I could afford my medications & doctor visits without hardship.

Before ACA came into effect, I couldn't even get insured because of the "pre-existing condition". My life depends on these medications, and if my insurance is cut, I won't be able to afford them.

– **Laurie, Cotati, CA**

I receive my health insurance through Medi-Cal, thanks to the expansion of Medicaid by the Affordable Care Act. I lost my previous health insurance through divorce. I am low income, with a previous cancer diagnosis. If it weren't for Medicaid and the ACA, I would be unable to obtain health insurance. As a single mother, this means a huge amount to me. I want to be here and be healthy for my daughter.

– **Martha, Arcata, CA**

I lost my job in 2006. At the time, as a healthy woman without income, I had opted out of exorbitantly priced Cobra insurance as I simply could not afford it. And then I learned I was pregnant. Thankfully, I was able to qualify for Medicaid for the duration of my pregnancy. My son was born 2 months early and spent a month in the hospital. The cord was wrapped so tightly around his neck we had to have an emergency C section.

Without proper healthcare, I could have easily died in childbirth, taking my son with me. He is a thriving 10 year old now thanks to this program. And I have a great job that provides me with excellent healthcare, but I am so fortunate that I was able to get the care I needed when I couldn't afford it and needed it most.

– **Nicole, Irvine, CA**

My husband and I adopted our daughters through the foster care system. Our oldest was safely surrendered and we have no idea about her birth history. She has had some various health issues and more recently needed mental health therapy that she received through school. Had she not had Medicaid she would not have qualified for the school program which has dramatically decreased her school and separation anxiety and made it possible for her to actually enjoy going to school.

Our youngest was drug and alcohol exposed in utero and as an infant was showing symptoms of possible neurological damage, tracheomalacia and hearing issues. With early intervention and ongoing care from a neurologist and various other specialists we've been able to treat her issues right away and she is now thriving. Purchasing insurance through my husband's employer is at least \$1400 and extremely cost prohibitive for us when co-pays and deductibles are added on. I work part time to be available for the girls and am not eligible to receive employer covered healthcare, so I am covered under ACA. Without Medicaid we would be struggling significantly financially and I doubt we would have been able to afford the great care our daughters have been receiving.

– **Sally, Gilroy, CA**

COLORADO

I was working full-time, single, no children, lots of school debt. I got hit with interstitial cystitis and required multiple visits to the doctor, procedures, surgery, medication. Because I did not have a strong support system I missed a lot of work. The procedures and surgery required were expensive even with insurance. I lost my job and I am now on Medicaid.

So many people speak out in anger, telling us to get a job or "it is not my fault you're sick why should I pay for it?" I will tell you why—Because I do not want to take advantage of the system. Because I want to work. More than anything, I want to work. If the community supports my health, I can contribute back to the community.

– **Kirsten, Boulder, CO**



Angela, Westminster, CO

My son has a rare genetic disease called tuberous sclerosis, which causes him to have various health problems. His current health and developmental problems are epilepsy, autism, developmental delay, and intellectual disability. He deals with heart issues, skin issues, and kidney issues as well, and he is at high risk for hydrocephalus. He needs consistent, specialized medical care and sees several specialists at Childrens Hospital Colorado.

He will deal with this disease his entire life, and his needs and problems will likely change as he ages. Oliver has a Medicaid waiver along with private insurance. Getting Medicaid when he was 2 years old was a life saver for my family. His medical bills were stacking up, even with the excellent insurance I had through my job. Medicaid has given my family room to breathe, financially speaking. His Medicaid waiver has also allowed him to access other therapies that would have been cost prohibitive without it.

Thirty years ago I was hit by a drunk driver and was dead for 3 and a half minutes before they brought me back. After 3 brain operations over 5 years and having to relearn how to read, write, and spell, I was forced to sell my business and became permanently disabled. I was 32 years old at that time. Ever since I have had to live on a fixed income and Medicare and Medicaid. I barely make it every month and it is only with the Medicaid am I am able to do so. Without it I would not, it simply is what it is, and what so many disabled people will tell you is a matter of life or death.

– **Kaylynn, Colorado Springs, CO**



Kim, Greeley, CO

My family's healthcare story starts with the fact that my husband is self-employed and, for us, finding affordable health insurance after I was laid off from my job with a publishing company in 2002 has been a huge challenge. Shortly after being laid off from my job I found out I was pregnant. We were able to stay on my company's insurance for a while, and though I had some preterm labor complications (and by necessity went on bedrest for a few months) our first daughter was born full term and quite healthy in 2003. After she was 6 months old, I returned to work part time.

We moved from Denver to Greeley (even though we would be moving away from family and help with child-care) because houses were significantly more affordable and I started working from home. My husband took a job with a new company and we were in a "waiting period" for insurance when I became pregnant again in 2004. Because we did not technically have maternity insurance, we waited to have the initial ultrasound. It took longer than we thought for insurance to cover us. At 20 weeks, my doctor decided we should do a "quick" ultrasound with his assistant just to check on things.

It turned out we were expecting twins! The news was exciting and also scary. It turned out our twins were most likely identical (they shared the outer amniotic sac). We did not know the location of the placenta(s). Identical twins that share a placenta and/or amniotic sac(s) are at much higher risk for complications during pregnancy, so we were monitored closely. Things were

going well, then at 31 weeks I went into labor. Because we were just shy of the 32 week mark, we were flown via helicopter to Presbyterian St. Luke's Hospital in Denver. The delivery went quickly and well, but one twin was born bright red and the other anemically pale. They had experienced twin-to-twin transfusion during birth: a condition where one twin transfuses blood through the placenta to the other twin. It is often life-threatening when it happens during gestation.

Our twin boys spent the next 7 weeks in the NICU. When they came home they were very challenging babies—colicky and still learning to feed. At about 9 months I noticed Jack was not reaching milestones his brother Dylan was reaching (rolling over, etc.). At a follow up visit at Pres. St. Luke's he was tested and they recommended he get an MRI and see a neurologist. The MRI determined he had suffered a grade IV brain bleed (most-likely at birth) and had moderate Cerebral Palsy.

During this time we were struggling to pay the astronomical medical bills from the helicopter ride (\$21,000) and the 7 week stay at the NICU (upwards of \$150,000 for each child). We negotiated with the hospitals what we could on a payment plan. Things were very tight. Jack started receiving physical and, eventually, speech therapies at home. There were many visits to the doctor. About this time, it was recommended to me to apply for Medicaid for my disabled child, which I did and he then received. In early 2007, our youngest daughter was born, healthy and full-term. In late 2007 my husband's

employer had to cut way back on his hours and he then started his own business. We had to shop for individual health insurance and could not afford to insure everyone in our family. So my husband and I went without health insurance for several years. Eventually we applied for Medicaid coverage for our other 3 children, which they then received. Jack started walking when he was 3 1/2 years old, thanks to very hard work with physical therapists and sheer determination.

When Jack was 4 he had a selective dorsal rhizotomy surgery: A ten-hour surgery on his spinal cord to selectively sever certain nerves to greatly lessen the high muscle tone in his lower extremities. Recovery from this surgery was an 8 week in-hospital stay, with intense physical therapies. In 2011 Jack had a series of grand mal seizures and we nearly lost him. There were several trips to the ER and a sleep study.

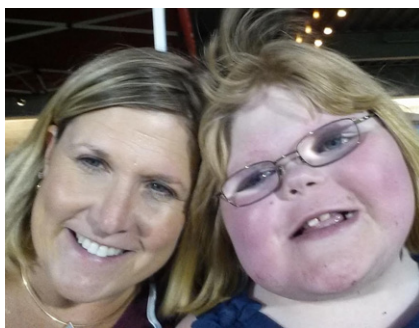
After this, my husband and I applied for Medicaid through the expansion of Medicaid under the ACA and have been receiving it since then. Two years later, Jack had several more grand mal seizures and he has been on anti-seizure medications ever since. He has not had another seizure to date. Jack walks but falls often. We have been to the ER many times for stitches and once (amazingly, only once so far!) for a concussion.

Living with a child with a disability is hard on morale. It is hard on a marriage. We work hard and love each other and stick together. Jack is an amazing human being, who has gone through every hurdle in his life with a smile. He would give you the shirt off his back with that same sweet smile. My husband's business continues to pay the bills, but we live very frugally on less than \$30,000 a year. Medicaid, and the expansion of Medicaid under the ACA, have saved my son's life and our family's financial viability countless times.

Without it, I am sure we would be quite destitute and my son's quality of life (if he were able to live through being denied access to anti-seizure medications) would be greatly diminished.

As a mother of two young children, I suffered a tear in an artery in my neck a few years ago that led to several strokes. During my recovery, my family lost our insurance because we couldn't afford our premiums anymore without me being able to work. We were so relieved to be able to rely on Medicaid during that difficult time. I'm now back at work and we're getting our insurance through the ACA health insurance exchange. I'm blessed that my medical crisis happened at a time when I could count on getting medical care when I needed it the most and my young children never had to go without their medical care either.

– Robin, Englewood, CO



Missy, Colorado Springs, CO

My daughter is a 12 year old who loves books, movies, swimming and riding her bike. She also has an intellectual disability coupled with health issues that can be fine for months and then, bam, require a 14 day hospital stay in the blink of an eye. One of her daily medicines comes in a 10 ml bottle that only lasts 10 days and each bottle re-tails for \$400.

If we didn't have her Medicaid HCBS waiver as our SECONDARY insurance for her, we would be in deep trouble financially. She still requires weekly speech, occupational, and physical therapy so she can eventually be a working member of her community. Again, our regular insurance covers maybe 20 visits a year so not even 1/2 the year she needs. We are happy to pay for part of her insurance with private pay but if Medicaid gets cut and her private insurance won't pay for many things she needs, our family may not be able to afford private insurance for ANY of us as my job as her CNA (where we get our private

insurance from) will likely go away and you may end up with our whole family needing Medicaid insurance instead of only a portion of my daughters needs.

I do not know what my family would have done without Medicaid when my mother was institutionalized with Alzheimer's disease. We private-paid for three years, and when she was broke, having spent everything she worked a lifetime for to sit wasting away in a nursing home, Medicaid picked up the tab for the last five years. What on earth would have happened to her without that support? I sincerely do not know how some people would survive without Medicaid.

– Marilyn, Grand Junction, CO

My son, with no history of any similar problems, was hit by a half hour long seizure at school. Without Medicaid, we could never have afforded the ambulance ride, ER visit, and follow up visits with his pediatrician and various specialists to find out what was the cause.

My other son has anaphylactic reaction to wasp stings. He had to carry an EpiPen. Those now cost between \$650-\$800 per year just to have one on hand. If he were not covered by Medicaid, I would not be able to afford to keep him safe.

– Regan, Hotchkiss, CO

In the past year both my husband, my brother, and myself have been diagnosed with various forms of cancer. Thanks to the ACA we all three were able to obtain treatment without horrifying bills that we could never pay in a thousand years. My husband and I put out over a third of our monthly income into supplemental health to make sure we have no medical bills above and beyond insurance coverage. My brother hasn't been so lucky in providing his own health insurance since he lost his business back in 2008 when the last big financial fall out happened so he was able to receive not only his medicare coverage, but thanks to ACA was able to also receive Medicaid support to cover additional expenses.

– Sandy, Silt, CO

I had the support of WIC and Medicaid as

a first time, poor mother 12 years ago - and a complicated pregnancy. Without it, my daughter wouldn't be the healthy delightful young lady she is today...vaccines, breastfeeding classes, vitamin recommendations, and pregnancy visits are just a few reasons we are alive today.

– Jodi, Aurora, CO

CONNECTICUT

My brother, age 63, with multiple serious health conditions, only recently began getting health care coverage through Medicaid. He was self-employed his whole life and never had any health coverage or health care. His health conditions are serious and require regular visits with his healthcare providers. I fear for his overall health if the Medicaid program undergoes cuts.

– Mary, Manchester, CT

During my marriage, my husband had a severe stroke that left him unable to walk, dress himself, and do many other activities of daily living. He was only 50, so did not qualify for Medicare. He was home for a while, but the home care we got was not enough and I was working full time, so I had to put him back in a nursing home, which my insurance did not cover. We could not have managed without Medicaid.

– Martha, Portland, CT

Several years ago I had a seizure, fell and cracked my hip, and crushed my pelvis. Since then I have walked with a crutch. My new Dr. changed my medication. I still can't get around by myself, and need constant checkups. Without insurance (which we used at the beginning) and Medicaid I would not be able to stay alive. I need to take several medications to treat epilepsy.

– Marilyn, Norwich, CT

For 20 some years, our family has been grappling with the devastating chronic illness of schizophrenia. Our son, now adult, has a community treatment team, which he would NOT have without Medicaid. We found out very quickly in the the course of his illness, that private insurance will not pay for the care neces-

sary to keep someone well. Even though there is suppose to be parity, there isn't. Medicaid makes the difference in the quality of his health care. It is essential for most living with a serious mental illness. If cuts are made, it will be very harmful.

– **Marilyn, Canton, CT**

DELAWARE



Patricia, Lewes, DE

My severely developmentally disabled 43 year old son requires 24/7 care with Medicare and a Medicaid Waiver medical day program. The State of MD already provides extensive room and board coverage to his non-profit residential program. (We were all poisoned by lead in the mid-'70s. This son got the brunt of the poisoning.) Without adequate funding for the extensive medical services he and the approximately 90 disabled in his program, those programs and those like them across the nation will go under.

FLORIDA

My husband and I have adopted 4 special needs children from foster care. Their Medicaid literally is what allows treatment for a variety of diagnosis's and life saving medication.

– **Cherie, Apopka, FL**

My daughter is almost 2 and she has Medicaid. I am an LPN working on my

RN, and I can't afford to pay for her health insurance. Medicaid is a lifesaver for her, and it was for me when I had pregnancy Medicaid. All exams, tests, and hospitalization were covered 100%. I am so thankful for Medicaid.

– **Deanna, New Port Richey, FL**

I'm a self employed, single mother of 3. I could never afford health insurance, but once the ACA was implemented, I applied and my kids and I were all approved to be covered by Medicaid. Because Florida didn't participate in the Medicaid expansion I got kicked off Medicaid in 2016.

Luckily I was able to get coverage under the ACA, and qualified for the tax credit so I'm still insured. I worry that my insurance will be taken away, and that my kids will no longer be covered.

– **Helena, Plantation, FL**

I am the primary caregiver for my elder sister, who has cancer and utilizes Medicaid. Medicaid paid for her chemo, hospital stays, and her ongoing treatment and radiation. Anyone who has ever cared for a loved one suffering knows that it is heart wrenching and full of triumphs and pitfalls and accomplishments. Medicaid allows me to focus on her and not just the financial aspect. Cuts to her Medicaid subsidized insurance would endanger her life.

– **Sandy, Orlando, FL**

My son-in-law has been out of work, due to downsizing, for over a year and has not been able to find suitable employment. I live with my daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren, ages 7 and 3. We have exhausted all of our savings and I have had to cash out my IRA so that we can keep our home.

I cannot work due to heart failure and arthritis, and we are relying on Medicaid for the children's healthcare, and the SNAP program for food. My retirement income is going into keeping our home and having food. I am appalled at those politicians who want to take away our lifelines, and would love to see any one of them try supporting a family of five on a net income of \$32,500.

– **John, Apopka, FL**

My daughter had Medicaid while she was pregnant. My granddaughter needed two intrauterine blood transfusions to survive while inside her mom. There was also another necessary surgery to maintain her pregnancy.

They delivered Jillian two weeks early and she had to stay in the new born ICU for two weeks after she was born. Without Medicaid she would not have survived. She is an amazing beautiful and loving 7 year old thanks to Medicaid.

– **Morgan, Tallahassee, FL**

My son works 3 jobs in Florida, has no employer supplied health insurance, and cannot pay for extra expenses. He is not alone. My vulnerable grand children would not be able to get treatment for any ailment without Medicaid.

– **Marilyn, Delray Beach, FL**

Medicaid has been the saving grace and filled in the gaps when Medicare didn't. I have a life threatening illness, and wouldn't have made it this far without Medicaid. I was able to go to college at 40 and graduate with honors, but without Medicaid, I would have already been dead.

I have been able to contribute to my community and society as a direct result of Medicaid. People have no idea how important the Medicaid program is, and most don't care about it, until they need it. It isn't a program for losers who don't want to work or contribute to society. It is a program to lift people up in times of great need!

– **Scott, Fleming Island, FL**

GEORGIA

I have been fully disabled for many years with a combination of life-threatening and severe, chronic illnesses. Since I've been ineligible for medicare I've had to rely on Medicaid for my continued treatment and survival.

It's as simple as that. As someone with few material resources of my own, and in chronic poor health, I would have been dead years ago without Medicaid.

– **John, Duluth, GA**

MEDICAID PROVIDES HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR 2 IN 5 CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES



SOURCE: <http://files.kff.org/attachment/fact-sheet-medicaid-state-US>

As a speech-language pathologist, I have the privilege of working with a large number of extremely disabled children and adolescents whose families suffer extreme burdens to finance services for their children. Medicaid provides rehabilitation for children with conditions ranging from brain injury or cleft palate to autism who would otherwise be left to languish rather than reaching their full potential as human beings. Rehabilitation is extremely expensive; Medicaid assists in bearing some of that financial burden to provide services which every person in the U.S. is entitled to regardless of income.

– **Joan, Bogart, GA**

My daughter, Kara, is 36 years old and has Rett Syndrome, a neurodevelopmental disorder. She requires 24 hour care, has no self help skills, is non verbal, non ambulatory, and functions on a 12 month level. She lived at home until she was 32. And today she lives in a nursing home in a residential facility for mentally disabled adults. She has been on Medicaid since age 18 and her nursing home is partially funded by Medicaid.

Without this assistance we could not

have provided the skilled care that she requires. We cannot physically care for her at home any longer. Medicaid has been vital to Kara's, and our, well being. To dismantle this vital program in any way would be tragic! We must care for the most vulnerable among us. That is what makes America great.

– **Karen, Stone Mountain, GA**

HAWAII

My wife sees a psychiatrist (has undifferentiated schizophrenia with symptoms in remission due to medication and psychiatrist visits) paid for by Medicaid. This enables her to be a productive citizen in the community to the best of her abilities. Without psychiatric services, since she is nonviolent, she'd probably end up in a state hospital. We cannot afford a psychiatrist and the rather expensive medications out of pocket.

– **Paul, Honolulu, HI**

IDAHO

I am a disabled senior, on Medicaid. Frankly, without this access to medical

care, I'll die. I can't even begin to afford the high costs of medical care on my own.

You say we are sick now because of bad lifestyle choices we made? Why should government pay for that? 1) I always lived a healthy lifestyle and worked right up until I couldn't anymore. 2) Our Constitution provides the basic right to pursue "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"...well, I couldn't do that without access to medical care. This is what every other major country in the world has realized, and provide their citizens.

– **Judith, Idaho Falls, ID**

ILLINOIS

My adult son with autism receives housing in a Community Integrated Living Arrangement and attends a day program for the developmentally delayed through a Medicaid waiver program in the state of Illinois. My husband and I are aging parents without many resources to provide for him. Without Medicaid funding his future would be one of poverty and probable homelessness.

– **Christine, Chicago, IL**

In March, 2016, a nephew had a double stroke which caused him total paralysis. After 6 months he lost coverage from his health insurance. He had to apply for Medicaid to continue the treatment. After 15 months he is still undergoing daily OT, PT, and Speech Therapy. This would not be possible if not for the Affordable Care Act!

– **Gloria, Chicago, IL**

I am a single woman who adopted my daughter at birth. She has a complex congenital heart defect—one of the most rare—which I knew about before I adopted her. Because her birth mom was on Medicaid, my daughter was on Medicaid from birth, which covered her 7 week hospital stay including cardiac procedures such as heart catheters, tests, medications and cardiologists care. This would have cost in the thousands of dollars. I left my job to stay home with her during her two open heart surgeries at 5 months and 9 months and her Medicaid covered both surgeries and after care.

My daughter is now 3 and heading into her third open heart surgery in the next couple of months. Knowing that Medicaid will be there to make sure she gets the life-saving treatment she needs allows me to focus on caring for her and making this painful, scary experience a little less difficult.

– **Leslie, Wheaton, IL**

My parents rely on Medicaid and Medicare. Both have health conditions that would be considered pre-existing conditions. They already pay over \$500 a month for supplemental insurance. My mom had a major health issue this year that per her doctors was basically a random occurrence. Medicaid saved my parents from drawing all their retirement and going bankrupt. When dealing with a severe medical issue, people shouldn't have to worry about how they're going to pay the bill. They should only have to worry about getting better.

– **Lindsay, Chicago, IL**

I am suffering from a disabling Mental Illness and since I cannot work, I rely on Medicaid to pay for my medical expenses and for a place to live. I have used Medicaid for the last 25+ years and if I didn't have Medicaid, I would be homeless and without insurance.

– **Carol, North Aurora, IL**

INDIANA

I work in a practice dealing with high risk special needs children who have multiple medical and genetic problems. Most of these children would not be able to receive important and life-saving diagnoses and treatments without Medicaid, nor would they and their families have access to critical services. Several years ago I invited state senators and representatives to visit us and see the work we are doing and the families we serve. NOT ONE responded. These families are trying to do the very best job they can, and often are unable to work due to the demands of caring for the multiple needs of these children. Medicaid coverage is crucial for these children and their families.

– **Barbara, Fort Wayne, IN**



Cyndi, Bloomington, IN

I come from a background of generational poverty in the hills of southern Indiana. I don't recall going to the doctor growing up, so it was a good thing I was generally healthy besides the occasional cold. I worked hard throughout school and was awarded numerous college scholarships – becoming the first person on either side of the family to earn a degree. I went on to work as a math teacher in Indiana for years and even earned a masters, but later, when I started a family and discovered prenatally that I was going to have a baby girl with Down syndrome, my life changed dramatically.

It became clear shortly after she was born that to coordinate her medical care, I would need to be a stay-at-home mom. Virtually overnight, we went from being a two-income family with no medical expenses to a one-income family with astronomical medical expenses. I remember standing at the mailbox with my tiny baby (still under 10 pounds at 11-months-old!) cradled in my arms and opening an envelope from the children's hospital with a bill inside for \$64,000 – more than my husband's annual salary – for merely “renting” the surgical room and equipment used during her heart surgery the month before. I fought back tears as I tried to wrap my mind around it – recognizing that more bills would soon arrive in my mailbox for the hospital stay, surgeon's fees, and more.

Then it hit me: This was our new reality. Over the next several years, even with private insurance through my husband's employer, the bills added up quickly. Besides deductibles and co-pays, there were many expenses insur-

ance didn't cover: medical equipment and supplies, high-tier medications, out-of-network specialists, therapies, incontinence supplies, specialized feeding supplies, travel, and more. Our out-of-pocket costs were spiraling with no end in sight. We even took out a home equity line of credit, all the while fast approaching the lifetime cap on medical expenses imposed by our private insurance.

Then came the Affordable Care Act – covering 28 million Americans who were previously without health insurance. We were so grateful, not only for all those Americans gaining peace of mind, but for the peace of mind we had knowing that lifetime caps had been eliminated. Of course, there was still the issue of our mounding medical debt. But then in 2015 after being on a waiting list since birth, my then-8-year-old daughter became eligible for the Medicaid waiver in the state of Indiana, effectively rendering her eligible for Medicaid Disability.

Medicaid now covers much of what private insurance does not, and while the system is still far from perfect (we still incur hundreds of dollars of un-covered medical expenses each month), it has meant a much brighter financial future for my family. We have paid off most of our medical debt and have even begun saving for college for my other two children.

We adopted our daughter at age 2 months. We were told there was arthritis in her biological family but were not alarmed. She was an excellent athlete in high school but began having knee pain at age 17. Many surgical procedures later, then knee replacements, finger tendons cut, SI joint fusions, 2 spinal fusions plus frequent migraines, she was finally declared totally disabled at age 41. She cannot sit or stand long enough to do a job. Her only health care has been by Medicaid. Her two children, now 16 and 21 have relied on Medicaid all their lives since their father died and my daughter couldn't provide income.

I have been divorced 25 years and depend on Social Security for most of my income. (I taught school for 30 years but

have only a small pension because many jobs were in private schools that don't provide pensions at all). I am responsible for most of my daughter's living expenses. Without reliable health care, we would probably be homeless due to staggering healthcare bills.

– **Elizabeth, Fort Wayne, IN**

I am a low-income epileptic who struggled for years to control my seizures. This was not because my case was such a difficult one, but because I had no insurance and could not afford to see a specialist or get more than one or two of the specialized tests needed for my condition. I could not even afford the regular blood tests needed to determine the dosing of my medication and suffered for years with ineffective medication that I couldn't really afford because of it. This made it impossible for me to work, drive, or otherwise live independently.

Recently I was able to get Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act and now have been able to see a neurologist and get the testing I needed to make my medication effective. It also made that medication affordable and now I am living independently and working on getting a job and to the point where I can drive. Without my Medicaid, there is no way I could afford this medication and medical care and would be worse off than before.

– **Genevieve, Valparaiso, IN**

I am a single mom with 3 boys ages 11, 15 and 18. I am so grateful and thankful for the Medicaid program here in Indiana. When I got out of an abusive marriage several years ago, it was an unbelievable challenge. Even though I have BA and MSW degrees, I had been a stay-at-home mom for a large part of the previous 10 years. My divorce also occurred during the terrible recession of recent years. Finding a good paying job with benefits was impossible. Without Medicaid, my children would not have been able to get preventative checkups and emergency medical care. I was able to get treatment for high blood pressure that originated with my first pregnancy. Without these services, I would be at tremendous risk for heart attack and stroke. And then who would take care

of my 3 children? Providing preventative and ongoing medical care to children, families and adults saves money and saves lives! Healthcare for all is the morally right thing to do.

– **Wendey, Georgetown, IN**



Rachel, Warsaw, IN

My daughter who is four years old with Pierre Robin Sequence and tracheomalacia has benefited from the affordable care act. She is allowed on our private insurance due to no maximum benefit. This has helped pay for her multiple hospitalizations, multiple surgeries, home supplies, ventilators, and so on. She is also on Medicaid to help cover what our private insurance does not cover such as nursing services.

Without nursing services she would not be alive today because there is no way that I can stay up 24/7 to watch her. She has coded multiple times and my nurse has saved her life multiple times. Please, her life is so important to my whole family and extended family. Little side note: she is the smartest kid in her class per her teacher.

For 40 years, I've been a registered nurse. No other health care issue affected my practice like the ability to have access to care. As a psychiatric nurse, I saw devastating impact on youth, post partum women and young adults who once diagnosed with treatable mental health or substance disorders, lose their insurance coverage. I also worked w 100s who in their middle years quit jobs to care for

elders and then succumb to illness. It is unconscious able still how many caregivers go without any health care coverage of their own.

In 2009 lost my job and then within a year could not afford COBRA I postponed certain medical treatment and a surgery. In retrospect it's clear these decisions were not my best and my health stamina and my ability to work full time was affected. Eventually ACA was available which significantly changed my circumstances. The Medicaid expansion was essential for my son and his treatment of depression. It is humane and part of decent society to continue the ACA. These are just a few of my thoughts.

– **Donna, Greenwood, IN**

IOWA

I need Medicaid to stay alive, literally. I am on permanent disability. My mental health is under control right now for the first time in 45 years. However, if I lose my caseworker, therapist, medications, and psychologist I know for a fact I will die by my own hand. I'm scared.

– **Heidi, Des Moines, IA**

I work with children with special needs. Medicaid programs help these children and their families live better lives, assisting with daily care issues, and helping so many people live fuller and more independent lives.

– **Mary, Marion, IA**

I have been on Medicaid most of my life. Most of the people close to me are also on Medicaid or in my grandmother's case, Medicare. Without Medicaid, I wouldn't have been able to afford the birth of my daughter, or her health issues early in life. As someone who has always struggled with poverty, as well as everyone I know being impoverished, we rely on Medicaid for the most basic of medical care. Being unable to treat a simple infection or get a checkup for your child is something no one should deal with, especially in America. If we live in the greatest country, then healthcare should not only be available to the wealthy.

– **Kelley, Council Bluffs, IA**

I can't afford insurance, because I am on disability. I have several problems that need medical attention and medications. If I didn't have them, I wouldn't be able to function. My daughter also has severe diabetes, and if she didn't have her Medicaid she would die. She has to have two different kinds, plus other supplies. It also helps her with her two daughters. I thank God and bless you for helping me and others out with Medicaid.

– **Patty, Davenport, IA**

I am a senior with a chronic mental health disability. Medicaid is my safety net for my medications. If I do not take my medications I cannot function at a basic level to do my daily activities. My family cannot economically afford to take care of me.

And my ability to live on my own would also be affected. Since I am able to live on my own I do contribute in a basic way to the local economy and have some quality of life to maintain my basic health. As a disabled senior, I receive Medicaid to pay for my medications (which are totally necessary for me to function) as well as my overall healthcare. I live on a very low income and cannot afford to lose my healthcare.

– **Kris, Iowa City, IA**

My mother after two years in nursing home with debilitating rheumatoid arthritis had exhausted her savings. Her long term care insurance paid only a tiny fraction of the monthly fees so she had to go on Medicaid for the last two years of her life.

– **Susan, Lovilia, IA**

KANSAS

My mother and father were married 55 years before Mom passed away in August, 2016 from complications of Alzheimer's, diabetes, and heart disease. Together, my parents raised four children. They both worked outside the home to provide a middle-class life for our family despite the fact that my father was deaf. My mother was a saint handling all the phone calls, bills, conver-

sations with teachers, doctors, grocery shopping and working as an accounts receivable/payable person. In retirement, my mother received \$1,150 in Social Security and retirement. Because she was a woman, her earnings were far less than my father. How does this "play out" when a person needs assisted living and then nursing care?

In 18 months of living together in Assisted Living, my parents paid out more than \$126,000 dollars for their care. You see, my dad could not envision living without mom. She had always been his ears and often his voice when others people found it too difficult to communicate with a deaf person. Of that \$126,000, \$63,000 came from their combined Social Security and Retirement. More than \$63,000 came from their savings.

After 18 months, my dad found it too difficult to live with mom in her deteriorating condition. We sold their house to provide more cash to their dwindling savings. We separated their assets so as not to leave dad penniless and mom entered an Alzheimer's Nursing Care Community. It was not lavish by any means. The building had been around from the early 1970's and was in great disrepair. The staff were wonderful. Her care averaged \$6,800 per month and her \$1,150 dollars of Social Security and retirement didn't help much.

My mother passed away only 9 months after she arrived. Currently, there is .70 cents left in her bank account. And, there are unpaid bills. Medicare and Medicaid helped pay for her health care. Without it, what would have happened? How would we have cared for her?

The wealthy politicians, business men and women, Wall Street tycoons, and many other people are increasingly unaware of the "cost" of living and dying for the average person in the United States. Disease doesn't know wealth, race, religion, or party affiliation.

– **Debora, Overland Park, KS**

Our son has mental illness and has been greatly helped by Medicaid. He or we could never have paid for his doctor's visits and prescriptions without Medicaid assistance.

– **Roberta, Manhattan, KS**

KENTUCKY

My son got health insurance for the first time in 10 years. He was able to get some medical issues cleared up and was able to sign up quickly and easily. My husband has a pre-existing condition and his medical insurance became very affordable. Then I have a 22 year old grandson that will now have insurance until he can get a job and get settled.

– **Patricia, Carrollton, KY**

My babysitter's son had a brain tumor as a child and had radiation treatment and a shunt placed permanently to drain fluid from his head. He also had severe problems with allergies and asthma. As an adult he supported himself by working as a hod carrier in his brother's brick laying business. He was not able to obtain any other type of regular employment because he was sick with allergies frequently and would miss two or three weeks of work in the spring, summer, and fall.

Unfortunately, the heavy lifting, twisting and straining of his job pulled the shunt loose in his abdomen. He did not have health insurance due to not being able to afford it. His family was unable to help him financially so I stepped up to help him get an appointment to try to obtain help medically.

I have worked in healthcare for many years as an EEG technologist so was familiar with the type of problems he had. In the course of the medical evaluation for disability, it was discovered that James had developed a malignant tumor in his head which was thought to be a late effect of the radiation he had as a child.

Thanks to him obtaining Medicaid he was able to have successful surgery to remove the second tumor in 2007. He also has been able to see an allergist to get his allergies and asthma under better control. He has done much better physically although the doctors were not able to fix his shunt, so he continues to have major limitations in his ability to do any type of physical labor. He also has some memory problems due to mild damage to the memory area of his brain caused by the second tumor.

Nonetheless, he is an upbeat kind of

guy who tends to deal with the stress of his physical problems by trying to find humor in his situation. He is a joy to be around, and his family is so grateful to have him still with them when they thought he would surely die in 2007. Thanks to Medicaid, he is doing well and has a positive impact on everyone he meets.

– **Jacqueline, Nicholasville, KY**

I was laid off work in January 2014. The company for which I worked paid for my COBRA through the end of February, after which I would have to pay for it myself. I wasn't going to be able to afford the monthly premiums with how much I was drawing on unemployment, and I have to take maintenance medications for bipolar disorder.

I was able to get Medicaid for free through Kynect, and it paid full-price for all my medications, until I was able to get on disability two years later.

– **Tim, Stearns, KY**

MORE THAN 10 MILLION PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE INSURED BY MEDICAID



SOURCE: <http://lkff.org/report-section/medicaid-at-50-people-with-disabilities/>

LOUISIANA

My son works full-time in a very low-paying job without healthcare benefits. Last year he developed a clot. Thank goodness, he had been granted Medicaid based on the Medicaid expansion that Gov. Edwards had recently accepted for the state of LA. Therefore, he was able to get treatment that prevented the clot from possibly going to his lung and killing him!

The Medicaid expansion very possibly saved his life! Also, he has three children who were also recently placed on Medicaid. One of them has asthma which can be life-threatening. Thanks to Medicaid, he was able to get the nebulizer treatment, steroids, and rescue inhaler that asthmatics so desperately need!

– **Laura, West Monroe, LA**

I was born with physical disabilities that make it hard for me to find & maintain employment. I was NOT able to get private health insurance because of my preexisting conditions. The only health care I had was through Louisiana state Medicaid because I was lucky enough to get on SSI after I graduated high-school.

I was eventually lucky enough to find a job & able to get health care through my employer which covered a lot of my health care cost.

I eventually lost the job & I lost my health care with it. I qualified for Social Security Disability & I lost my Medicaid & was not able to qualify for Medicare for a year. I had to pay most of my SSDI check on my medical care sense I was unable to get private health insurance due to my preexisting conditions.

I qualified for Medicare after a year & also qualified for Medicaid extra help which pays for my part B & D cost. I'm able to get better medical care now that I need to help me return to the workforce.

– **Nicholas, Schriever, LA**

MAINE

My partner died from ALS in November. He had Medicaid because he was awarded SSDI because of his ALS. I left my job as a social worker with full benefits to care for him so he could die at home.

Because he had Medicaid, I was able to get paid to be his primary caregiver. This was less expensive for the State of Maine than paying for a nursing home. I got health insurance through the ACA while I cared for my partner. I still have insurance through the ACA.

I work part-time, am looking for full-time work, because when I lost my partner, I also lost my primary source of income. In the meantime I am being treated for sciatic nerve damage received while pulling and tugging on my partner while attempting to moving him around as his caregiver. So, I now have a pre-existing condition. ACA coverage, affordable health insurance matters to me.

– **Sandra, Bangor, ME**

In 1997 my husband and I had two young daughters. I was pregnant with our son. I was too small to deliver a large baby vaginally. We had no idea how we'd pay the different bills associated with a C-section. Luckily we were able to get Medicaid.

– **Julia, Veazie, ME**

MARYLAND

When my nephews were ages one and two, they came to live with me due to their parents' drug addiction. I raised them to adulthood. At first, I was a single parent. I had health insurance for myself and my son, but my insurance company would not accept my nephews as dependents on my insurance. For five years, until I married my 2nd (current) husband (who worked for the federal government, and they did allow us to add my nephews to our health insurance), Medicaid was the only health insurance my nephews had any access to.

As the children of drug-addicted parents, they had multiple health issues. These issues were successfully addressed because of Medicaid. As a single parent, I could never have afforded their medical care without insurance. They are both strong and healthy today, productive members of society, with families of their own. Medicaid was a life-saver for us.

– Catherine, Mt. Airy, MD

My family was out of work for two months and we couldn't afford to pay for health insurance. I signed up for Medicaid coverage for my six month old baby and myself while my husband went without. It was an easy process and I am so thankful that safety net is there.

– Julianna, Silver Spring, MD

My son, a moderately retarded middle-aged man, could not possibly support himself. He holds a part-time job in a veterinary's office. He likes to work and loves the contact with animals. His employer appreciates him, but could not put him in a full-time job. With Medicaid, he can get complete medical attention and have the self-respect that comes from having his own income. Without it... I hate to think.

– Katharine, Gaithersburg, MD

Thank god for the ACA! First, I was allowed back on parent's plan. Then, a year later, I went onto Medicaid because I worked 30 hours a week for 10.50 an hour. When you live in the DC metropolitan region that is just not enough!

Medicaid was the best insurance I've ever had. And ever since I got married, we have used the ACA marketplace and subsidies to get health insurance. While I would prefer a National Healthcare (and honestly, it's the only type of health insurance that makes sense), I am so thankful for Obamacare.

– Natasha, Frederick, MD

MASSACHUSETTS

My sister is mentally ill. She is not able to work, can't drive and relies on her state benefits to survive. She is on Medicaid and would not be able to afford therapy and her medications without it. I would venture to say that most people getting help from Medicaid truly need it. Taking it away or decreasing current benefits would be inhumane.

– Gail, Westborough, MA

My teen daughter is mentally ill, and had suicidal ideation. She tried to commit suicide 8 times in 18 months. But our private insurance barely covered her treatment and was denying her any sort of long term care. We couldn't even find her a therapist who was willing to take her, due to our horrible private insurance. Everyone said I needed to get her on Medicaid to actually get her treatment.

I fought for a year, but was finally able to have her labeled disabled to qualify for Medicaid. Then treatment could finally begin. We were able to get her appropriate treatment and help and she finally started to get better. She has now been stable for 10 months and is planning for college next year. There is no doubt that Medicaid literally saved her life.

– J., Worcester, MA

I have been on Masshealth (Medicaid) for several years. I work but my part time jobs have no health insurance. Recently I helped my brother who lives in NYC to get on Medicaid. He was recently diagnosed with a possibly fatal heart condition and I was terribly worried about his health. Without health insurance I would not get regular check ups nor would I get the physical therapy I need for shoulder problems and neck problems. Getting

help for those things makes it possible for me to work.

– Betsy, Chicopee, MA

My mother is 98. She has lived so long that she went through all her savings and now lives on social security alone. If it were not for Medicaid she could not afford medical treatment.

– Rena, Watertown, MA

I have worked all my life. I didn't get my Bachelor's degree until after my Multiple Sclerosis diagnosis (which "allowed" me to go on SSDI) but I never expected returning to a normal work life to become so impossible! If I didn't have Medicaid I could DIE (some of my medications are literally impossible to go off of). How is anyone "to blame" for something like this? I can't afford health care without the help of Medicaid! When you or someone you love has any type of serious medical issue it's impossible to live without help.

– Yvonne, Cambridge, MA

MICHIGAN

I am a pediatrician who sees children who have Medicaid several times a day. The health care services these children receive would not be possible were it not for their Medicaid coverage. Medicaid really is a much needed service that helps to equalize the playing field for all children to pursue a better life by giving them access to quality health care and mental care services.

– Ayesha, Canton, MI

I have dysthymia and generalized anxiety disorder. Without medical help, I am unable to stay gainfully employed. Therefore, having Medicaid has been crucial to maintaining my health.

– S., Grass Lake, MI

My sister suffers from a chronic illness that has forced her to go on disability and receive Medicaid. She is only 36 and faces a lifetime of inability to work. Medicaid provides coverage for her medications as well as an aid to come by her

home to assist with light housekeeping, etc. Without Medicaid, my sister would not have the coverage she needs to survive.

– **Jean, Ypsilanti, MI**

I am a Nurse Practitioner who has spent much of my career providing care for the undeserved. Prior to expanded Medicaid and the ACA I often felt helpless, uselessly trying to prescribe the most basic medications and treatments to patients without the resources to fill the prescriptions.

Without initial or preventative treatment many of my patients became worse or developed complications leading to chronic illness and infirmity. These were often people who otherwise could have improved in their health and been able to re-enter the workforce! Health care helps to break the cycle of poverty, ultimately saving future health care costs as well as the costs of unemployment and social welfare programs.

– **Joanne, Waterford, MI**

My entire family is on Medicaid because we are low income, without it we would not be able to afford routine medical care. Shortly after my son was born, I needed gallbladder surgery and was in the hospital for almost a week. Between that and his birth, if it were not for Medicaid, the debt would have completely destroyed us during what was already a financially vulnerable time.

– **Katherine, Detroit, MI**

When my ex-husband developed Stage IV cancer, he was not able to work and couldn't afford to pay for his own medical care. He was able to get Medicaid in Michigan to cover his treatment. Unfortunately, he lost his battle with cancer, but he didn't die owing thousands of dollars for his care.

– **Karen, St. Clair, MI**

I have two relatives on dialysis. Medicare and Medicaid are there only coverages. This is life sustaining treatment so it is mandatory. Both of them worked almost to full retirement age however kidney disease made them go out early on dis-

70 PERCENT OF NURSING HOME RESIDENTS ARE COVERED BY MEDICAID



SOURCE: <http://kff.org/health-reform/issue-brief/medicaid-moving-forward/>

ability benefits. They would rather be working however this is their fate at this time.

– **Linda, Adrian, MI**

MINNESOTA

I am now a single mom on Medicare since Nov 2011, Medicaid is my supplemental insurance and I have 2 “special needs” daughters. My 11 year old has mixed expressive receptive language disorder, an hypoxic brain injury, and ADHD, and my 9 year old has 4 spinal deformities including spina bifida at the T4 level (right behind her heart) and also has epilepsy. Being able to keep my children and for all 3 of us not to be institutionalized, for us to have access to all the doctors, specialists, therapists, and services available to us has been amazing!

– **Amanda, Saint Paul, MN**

Our daughter, who has Down Syndrome, was born with holes in her heart and later diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis. She has had MANY surgeries to repair her heart, and place and maintain

a pacemaker. She has also been on a biologic modifier and a chemotherapy drug for 13 years to control her arthritis.

Without Medicaid, she would be dead. Or, if she'd survived her heart issues without intervention, she would be completely disabled and nonfunctioning due to joint damage. The cost of the JRA drug has skyrocketed in just the last two years. We would certainly have lost our home if we had had to pay these expenses ourselves. We do everything in our power to maintain a healthy lifestyle and take responsibility for our health.

– **Leslie, Savage, MN**

My story is a difficult one to share but perhaps not unusual. I am retired and on Medicare, which is basically the only insurance I can afford. My son lives with me and he is disabled and has been since he was a child. He is deaf, developmentally delayed, suffers from end stage kidney disease which required a transplant and schizophrenia. There is no way he can survive if Medicaid no longer continues to cover him.

– **Constance, Saint Paul, MN**

MISSISSIPPI

My granddaughter was born weighing 1lb 10oz and now suffers from developmental delays and epilepsy. Her father had to leave his job with the US Navy to move closer to family who could help him with her severe medical and educational needs. Him and his wife work very hard to provide for her but her needs are more than this young family can handle alone.

– **Belinda, MS**

I am 26 years old, from MS, and working full time to support my mom. She has several debilitating diseases and can no longer work. We gained coverage through ACA. Without her insurance she would no longer be able to receive treatment.

– **Devin, Caledonia, MS**

I am an RN living in the poor state of Mississippi. I have seen many people benefit from the health care exchanges, including my own daughter and cousin. My daughter was on the exchanges because she worked a job that did not offer insurance, and the silver plan worked great for her. My cousin had to go part time with her job to take care of two elderly parents, and she lost her health care. She told me the insurance was great and affordable, and she was finally able to get her hip fixed.

As a nurse, I am worried about the impact of losing protections for pre-existing conditions, especially those with chronic conditions. My husband is a diabetic. Insulin is around 1,000 dollars for diabetics without insurance. Many people with chronic conditions will suffer and die without Obamacare. I support Medicare for all.

– **Lisa, Columbus, MS**

MISSOURI

I'm deaf and am on Medicaid. I'm grateful how Medicaid can help me to get doctors that I need to see. If I don't have Medicaid, then I can't afford to get my other health care and hospital bills. I can't afford to see my doctor to get my treatment. I can't get a good job be-

cause I'm struggling to find a job that I like is required oral communication and it blocks me to help other people. I'm facing discrimination. I'm struggling with my depression and go see my doctor constantly to help me deal with my depression.

– **Katie, Kansas City, MO**

As a single mom I am so grateful for Medicaid to help my daughter, with a disability, obtain her medications and see her specialists. I am also a home care attendant and know that without Medicaid my clients would not be able to afford the services they need.

– **Karen Brickey, Columbia, MO**

My grown step-daughter is using Medicaid now. Her work history is very sketchy because she is developmentally disabled and she has mostly had no-insurance jobs. Thankfully, she's been able to come back to Medicaid between low paying jobs.

– **Margaret, Independence, MO**

My son has a psychiatric disability and he needs his medication to live with some stability and it is very expensive. Without government Medicaid support he will not be able to afford his medications and he will end up in the hospital with no chance for a life. He cannot work.

– **Susan, Fayette, MO**

MONTANA

I worked for over 18 years with Developmentally Disabled adults including my step-daughter. This group would have serious health issues if they did not have their Medicaid services! They must be protected because they cannot protect themselves!

– **Frank, Lewistown, MT**

My daughter has Down Syndrome. Medicaid is indispensable to her quality of life, to our quality of life. It provides the support services that GIVE her a life. And, it has provided the medical services that have saved her life. I have been actively parenting for 34 years – no breaks. Many parents of young people with dis-

abilities parent and parent and parent. They work. They and their family members pay taxes.

– **Virginia, Bozeman, MT**

NEBRASKA

For years I went without needed health care coverage due to prohibitively costly premiums for preexisting conditions. The ACA was a lifesaver for me.

– **Elizabeth, Lincoln, NE**

The ACA has helped my family so much by enabling us to afford healthcare. I was in a car accident 10 years ago, through no fault of my own, and being a woman, I of course am a "pre-existing" condition already. Well, with a future of more surgeries and such, insurance companies didn't want me. Although I was very healthy, I had used all my lifetime cap already, at age 25. The ACA enabled me to be able to afford care for myself, my husband and 2 boys with no financial penalty.

– **Leah, Omaha, NE**

NEVADA

I had to quit my job to care for my Mother in her last years. I lost my employee insurance. Without the Affordable Healthcare Act, I would NOT have been able to afford health care. Now I am lucky and do not suffer from any health issues, but life brings many surprises and I want to be prepared. Everyone needs to be prepared. Everyone deserves health coverage!

– **Christine, Las Vegas, NV**

My husband is a diabetic & we have a small business. For the 1st 4yrs of his illness we couldn't afford insurance so he went to a local clinic that ended up closing along with the pharmacy where he got his insulin. He was fading fast due to the extremely high cost of insurance for a pre-existing condition.

Then came Obamacare – thank God. He got insurance for less than \$250/mo. However, by then the disease had progressed so much that he needed cata-

ract surgery & neuropathy had set in so severe that we are now closing our business. My husband was JUST approved for Medicaid in June & he's now able to get quality health care & after his surgery we'll be starting another small business. Without Medicaid I may have lost my husband.

- Rachael, Las Vegas, NV

My son Jordan has suffered for a dozen years (since he was seven) with an undiagnosed ailment that manifests itself as pain in his left leg and lower back. I have never been blessed long enough with enough health insurance to be able to have him diagnosed completely to find the source of his misery. He applied for Medicaid and was approved so he can begin seeing the right doctors to establish a cure for his pain.

- Jay, Reno, NV

NEW HAMPSHIRE

My son is a heroin addict. He has been in treatment and is getting better. His treatment is paid for by Medicaid. If not for Medicaid he would still be on heroin or dead.

- Jill, Winchester, NH

I am a 68 year old grandmother who has worked all my life. Now Medicaid and Medicare are making it possible for me to get the health care that is keeping me healthy, independent and contributing as a volunteer in my community hospital and other community institutions and groups.

- Linda, Eaton Ctr, NH

NEW JERSEY

In August of 2014 my sister had a stroke. She had multiple illnesses and was in and out of the hospital as well as nursing homes for rehabilitation. After the stroke she was immobilized by a paralysis as well as being unable to communicate, became incontinent and had to be placed in a nursing home.

When all of her insurances ran out Medicaid took over. It was a long process to obtain it but worth the agony of going through it. Now my sister had a place

with care 24/7. She was a middle class person who went through whatever funds she had by her illnesses and nursing homes. Medicaid was a godsend.

- Angela, Parsippany, NJ

My 44-year-old, intellectually/developmentally disabled daughter depends on Medicaid funding provided by the ACA expansion in order to receive the medical AND non-medical services she requires in order to live in the community. Funding for day programs, direct support professionals, extended job-coaching, respite care and community inclusion services, now comes through the Medicaid expansion. Services and supervision required for her to live in the community after I die depend on funding from the Medicaid expansion.

Without that funding, the mandates for community inclusion stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Olmstead Act would be impossible to achieve. Medicaid is not only for health care. It is also for services that assist and protect the developmentally disabled in the community.

- Joann, Hamilton, NJ

My brother, who has been diagnosed with mental illness since his teens, receives Medicaid. He was recently hospitalized with suicidal ideation. Without Medicaid he may have died, and with Medicaid he is able to receive the treatment he needs to keep him out of the hospital and functioning at his highest potential. This gives our family such peace of mind, especially because our mother has dementia and our sister is chronically ill.

- L., Waldwick, NJ

My experience with Medicaid is with my mom who is currently in assisted living for memory care for Alzheimers and other medical conditions. The only way she and can afford such care is thru Medicaid and Medicaid longterm care. Without this I don't know what would happen to my who has only her social security and I cannot afford to pay for her lodging and care along with paying doctor bills and drugs needed. This is a godsend for our family.

- Terry, Parkridge, NJ

My youngest daughter is adopted with a poor prenatal history. She experienced many difficulties associated with undiagnosed bi-polar disorder through her adulthood, Because of the services available through Medicaid she is finally under the care of a psychiatrist and is a much more stable human being and is finally able to keep a job.

- S., Morristown, NJ

NEW MEXICO

I personally depend on Medicaid to survive. When I was only eleven years old I developed an eating disorder. Ten years later I'm finally able to get help and am making a lot of progress. If something were to happen to my insurance, all that progress would be lost along with any hope of the future.

- Chelsea, Albuquerque, NM

We live well below the poverty line. There are 4 of us living on 12k a year. My oldest son has an underlying genetic disorder that we're getting him tested for, if we didn't have Medicaid we wouldn't be able to have him tested. He also receives monthly allergy shots due to severe environmental allergies. Both my boys are in therapy and are on medications for bipolar disorder and ADHD. If we lost access to these services both my boys would be lost to the system.

- Anna, Albuquerque, NM

None of the young adults in our family would have healthcare were it not for Medicaid. Our four year old grandson who has recently been rescued from being abducted by his meth-addict father is now getting stabilized in Head-Start, which would not have been possible without Medicaid. Healthcare coverage has fingers into more aspects of our lives than we can imagine.

- Debaure, Silver City, NM

Medicaid saved my life. In 2005 I was working a part-time job and had no insurance. Then I was diagnosed with leukemia, and given "two to twelve weeks" to live. I got treatment thanks to the Medicaid that was approved for me.

Before it was approved, I got a bill for \$224,000 from the hospital for a six week stay. That was just the beginning of my treatment. Obviously, I'm still here to tell my story, all because of government run health care programs, of which I am eternally grateful.

- Thomas, Santa Fe, NM

I have a son who is now 23. When he was younger, he needed several years of intensive Occupational Therapy for Sensory Processing Disorder. As a single mother, I would have been unable to pay for this vital medical need, which was covered through Medicaid. Because he received these services, he is now able to participate fully in society. He is now a Junior at the University of New Mexico!

- Misti, Albuquerque, NM

When my daughter was 11 years old, we were able to get her covered by Medicaid under a program designed to help under insured children. As self-employed workers, insurance was expensive! (Didn't get better until ACA came along.) Within a short time she was diagnosed with severe scoliosis and had to have a very big surgery almost immediately. I can not imagine how we could have gotten through this without Medicaid!

- Stephanie, Ponderosa, NM

NEW YORK

As a healthy HIV positive & undetectable person living on disability, I must say I am grateful for the assistance of the Medicaid program. As I bring myself back into the work world, the assistance that these programs gives is needed. Any cuts to these programs will hurt mostly the people who need and depend on the help.

- Otis, Bronx, NY

My two adult sons are disabled. They live in the State of New York. They are covered by Medicaid for their medical and dental care. They receive Medicaid Waiver Services in the form of Residential and Day Habilitation assistance. Medicaid cuts, block grants or privatization would be a disaster for them and others

like them. They have no one to speak for them, no one to advocate. They rely on us, this nation, for their support.

- Doris, Fort Edward, NY

My 75 year old father has Parkinson's disease and relies on Medicaid to receive medical treatment and therapy to help him maintain his balance, coordination and ability to be self sufficient. Without Medicaid, he would be unable to afford the necessary medical treatment, medicine and therapy which are essential for him to have a decent quality of life.

- Bernadette, New York, NY

I am the proud mother of a disabled 21-year-old man. He is able to stay on our insurance for some time, but he also has Medicaid. This Medicaid will provide him with life saving medical care, in the case that we are not there to support him.

I worry every day about his future, and his ability to care for himself. I need to know that he will be able to get medical care when he needs it, and that the hospital and doctors will be there for him. A measure of our society is how we care for the most vulnerable. We are not asking for a hand out, just the ability for my son to live a life with dignity.

- Catherine, Saratoga Springs, NY

My mother is on Medicaid. If not for Medicaid, I would not be able to get a home health aide to help her, as we couldn't afford one and she is totally bed ridden at this point. She would have to live out the rest of her days in a nursing home. I also would not be able to afford her medications.

- Claudette, Lindenhurst, NY

Medicaid has been a godsend for my partner who is disabled with Parkinson's disease. Medicaid makes it possible for him to stay in his own home by providing home health aides and transportation to doctors and hospitals.

- Geri, Troy, NY

My grandmother is 88 years old and will likely need to enter a nursing home

or receive round-the-clock care in her home at some time during the next few years. She will need Medicaid in order to do this. We should not be leaving the elderly without medical care when they often suffer from many medical problems.

Additionally, I changed careers and am currently in graduate school. My school is ending their student health insurance in July, so I will be applying for health-care through my state.

My income is very low since I am a full-time student and changed careers, and I will hopefully end up on Medicaid due to Medicaid expansion in my state. Medicaid is such an important resource for those of us who are struggling financially.

- Gillian, Huntington Station, NY

I was on Medicaid in NYS for about one year after my husband was laid off after 17 years at his job. We couldn't get on Cobra because the cost was obscene. Medicaid was a god-send to us. I have both pre-existing and chronic conditions and must see doctors and have tests pretty frequently.

Without Medicaid I don't know what I would have done. Both my husband and I ended up in the hospital at different times and would not have been able to cover the costs, putting us into terrible debt without Medicaid.

After 13 months my husband found a new job and we are now covered by his employer altho Medicaid coverage was better. People desperately need this assistance.

- Ann, Rye, NY

I am a pediatrician. Through the many decades I have spent caring for children, I cannot tell you how valuable Medicaid has been for my patients. Because of Medicaid, parents have brought their children in for routine care and immunizations. Those immunizations have prevented outbreaks of disease in our community (like measles, mumps, chicken pox, meningitis), as well as saved children's lives.

Because of Medicaid, I have been able to detect early signs of illness during routine well child exams, saving great ex-

pense rather than having children show up at an ER with late stage disease. Because of Medicaid, parents did not have to choose between feeding their children or buying needed medications.

– **Kathleen, Queensbury, NY**

I'm one of the millions of Americans who receives Medicaid, thanks to its expansion via the ACA. Even though I work full time, I don't make enough income to purchase health insurance. Medicaid has provided me with excellent preventive care that has kept me healthy, and the confidence that if I ever do have a serious illness, we can catch it early and get it treated.

– **Kendra Shank, New York, NY**

My daughter who is a survivor of brain cancer had no health insurance in North Carolina. When she moved back to New York and became eligible for medical she is able to get much needed follow up care.

– **Lori, Suffern, NY**

Medicaid helped my wife and I when we were expecting our son. I was a college student, had two part time jobs: VA Hospital and US ARMY RESERVE, plus the GI Bill, and some savings, but they were not enough.

Medicaid helped my son be born. Today my son benefits from Medicaid as he is a college graduate looking for a job.

– **Robert, Albany, NY**

I have a major illness that requires frequent medical visits and treatments that are pre-existing and there is no cure. Without the Affordable Health Care Act and Medicaid, I will not have the best possibility of living a quality life with quality care for my illness.

Without health care I will not have a fighting chance at life. I believe that I have been very blessed to live my life without any other major health issues this is because I had Medicaid coverage. I believe having the option to get quality care through Medicaid is the reason my illness was diagnosed early.

– **Sandra, New York, NY**

NORTH CAROLINA



Jill, Charlotte, NC

I used to work for the NC Department of Juvenile Justice as an Intake Court Counselor, but now I am a disabled single mother with a pre-existing condition. I receive Medicare coverage through Social Security Disability, which is critical because I see a number of doctors at least every 3 months, and I take 16 different prescription medications. My son is currently on Medicaid. If anything were to happen to either the Medicare or the Medicaid Health Care Systems, it would devastate my family!

Our teen age daughter receives Medicaid which has paid for several rounds of physical therapy over the years beginning at 10 months of age. As a result she moves smoothly and without pain despite being born with a hip defect. The early and continuing interventions should ensure a pain free adulthood.

– **Rebecca, Raleigh, NC**

Every member of my family has what insurance companies consider pre-existing conditions, which means without the ACA, we would likely be denied health insurance or be subject to exclusions & delays. My twin daughters were micro-preemies with lengthy stays in the NICU (one of them for almost a year!). They've had countless medical procedures and multiple surgeries. Both have costly lifelong chronic medical conditions.

Just the NICU stay for one of them alone was well over \$1 million. It costs well over \$100K each year for her medical care, therapy, & supplies, even without counting the cost of in-home care through our state's Medicaid waiver program.

She is medically fragile. Without the ACA, we would be destitute very quickly due to insurance's lifetime max. Our daughters would have to do w/out the medical care, supplies, & therapies they need. This would put their lives in danger. Our entire family would end up on public assistance to survive. That would only cost the government more money in the long run.

– **E, Clemmons, NC**

My brother has been disabled with schizophrenia for 4 decades. He is dependent upon Medicaid & Medicare. These supplements have provided him good care & have helped him remain at home in a loving family - not on the street as a chronically, mentally ill, homeless person. He provides great comfort to our 90 year-old Mom.

– **C, Raleigh, NC**

I have an adult son who has intellectual disability, autism, cerebral palsy and bipolar disorder. His needs are obviously extensive and complex. He lives in a community-based group home and attends a vocational day program, all of which is funded to a large degree by a Medicaid waiver program. He literally could not survive without it. He cannot work or live independently; he needs supervision and assistance 24/7. Even if he lived with me – what would happen to him when I die?

– **Jennifer, Gibsonville, NC**

My sister, who is now 70 years old, was diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 20. After years of floundering, of hospitalizations, and the interference through hallucinations and delusions of her own life and those of family around her, she qualified for social security disability.

Due to her huge medical bills and her inability to perform substantial gainful employment, she needed Medicaid to

pay her considerable medical expenses for psychotropic medications, hospitalizations and out-patient treatment. Medicaid made all the difference in her being able to live semi-independently.

– **Katherine, Pittsboro, NC**

Both of my sons have autism and are supported by a Medicaid waiver program which covers medical, therapeutic, and home/community services. My sons could not lead functional lives without these services because they require specialized assistance in every day life skills. They will continue to need support as they become adults. These services are critical to my sons' ability to be contributing members of society and to lead comfortable lives.

– **Kimberly, Cary, NC**

When I moved back to the US with my children after years abroad I had no insurance because I had very little money and no job. Medicaid sustained my family and kept us healthy for the six months it took for me to find a job that gave us health insurance. Now I am a teacher and don't need Medicaid, but for the people that do need it, it is a wonderful program!

– **Meredith, Charlotte, NC**

NORTH DAKOTA

I applied for Medicaid about 15 years ago for my father after he was placed into a long term skilled nursing care facility. My father served in the army during World War II. After the war my father returned home. Eventually he worked as a police officer in our hometown until his retirement. My father's career earnings were not great. He then worked as a janitor into his 80's.

My father was a very proud man who believed he was accountable to complete his work with dignity and pride no matter what that work involved. I remember my dad as a policeman walking every night in the 50's and 60's sometimes through terrible snowstorms to a building that housed the city's water valves and turning on the valves making sure the people of the city of Cooperstown,

ND would have a constant water supply.

Dad worked nights as a policeman and during the day built a house for our family one board at a time. Dad used our family car for police work because the city did not provide a car. The local banker would not provide my parents with a loan to finish paying for our house so it took several years for dad to complete building our home.

Even though my parents faced challenges they were very proud people who lived their lives to the best of their abilities. My dad did not enter a skilled care facility until he was 90 years of age. It was only after dad had his leg partially amputated due to diabetes for 45 years that he had to enter a nursing home.

Up until age 90 my dad walked every day until he could not any longer. He showed strength and fortitude something most people will never have the fortune to possess. My parents were not able to save a lot of money but made sure all bills were paid with no debt.

I applied for Medicaid for my dad so that my mother would have some savings even though minimal to live independently in a subsidized rental unit. My parents lived the American Dream. Their life was not easy. They worked very hard, raised a family of four children, paid the bills, and helped build a small community. Medicaid provided the means for my dad to live a few years longer. In my opinion Medicaid was a small price as compared to the service my dad provided the nation and community.

– **Joan, West Fargo ND**

My mother who is in a skilled care facility would not be able to afford the services she now has if Medicaid was not available. My mother who is 95 worked since she was 14 years of age up to age 75. She worked very hard throughout those years and deserves those services.

– **Joan, West Fargo, ND**

OHIO

My long-time companion has had a chronic illness for many years and is not able to work. Without help from Medicaid, we would have probably lost our

house and he would not be alive today. We are grateful that Ohio's governor expanded Medicaid in the state after the ACA was passed.

– **Barbara, Cleveland, OH**

My husband lost his job last year, and my family qualified for Medicaid. My family is unable to afford standard insurance through my husband's workplace, and we still qualify for Medicaid thanks to the expansion in the state of Ohio.

Unfortunately, the options through the marketplace wouldn't cover the medications I would need to stay well. I have no thyroid, depression and anxiety, and chronic pain, and need specific antidepressants to help with some of these issues. To afford these out of pocket, my family would have to choose to eat or pay for my medication.

– **B., Chillicothe, OH**

Without Medicaid, I would not have been able to get surgery for ovarian cancer in 2011 or 2 hips replaced in 2013. I am now more than 5 years cancer free, mobile and back to work.

– **Carol, Brecksville, OH**

My daughter had a devastating stroke 9 years ago at the age of 31. Medicaid has enabled her to get the medical care she needs to manage her disability. One of her children developed a heart condition which was life threatening. He was able to receive the treatment he needed and is healthy today.

My daughter is not yet ready to live independently and has been with my husband and me since her stroke. Our savings have been severely depleted but we are still managing. Without Medicare for my daughter and her boys we would have been devastated financially.

– **Clare, Cincinnati, OH**

My daughter has three children she is raising on her own. Her ex is a deadbeat dad who has never sent any child support since they divorced 6 years ago. She works and has been working, but since her wages are so low she still qualifies for Medicaid. My husband and I have been supporting her family as much as



Stephanie, Toledo, OH

My daughter was born with Schizencephaly, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, she's legally blind, non-verbal, uses a wheelchair, and has a feeding tube. Her medications, feeding supplies, and medical equipment/supplies cost thousands every month. Her feeding

supplies alone cost almost \$2,000, of which private insurance only covers a small portion. If she loses coverage and Medicaid is cut, she will die. There is no way anyone could afford the cost of her medical care, especially a family of five living on one income.

we can by providing housing and we have paid thousands of dollars in dental bills and eyeglasses for all of them. We are retired, but my husband took another job so that we could continue to help them financially as needed. We thank God that at least we have the comfort of knowing their medical bills and any medical emergencies are covered for the most part through Medicaid.

– M, CPU Miami University, OH

Yes. I wouldn't even know where to start to tell you how Medicaid has impacted and greatly helped our family in the best of ways possible. Our health and well being has greatly depended on it. When I first became pregnant with my first son, I called around to every insurance company and nobody, and I mean nobody, would accept me based on the fact I was pregnant. They saw it as a "pre-existing condition!" Can you believe that?

So I looked further, for I had no idea how this all worked, and was told I was eligible for Medicaid. I was high risk so thank god for having insurance at all, and my son could have had some serious complications at birth if it wasn't for the intervention of the specialists. Even later he was diagnosed with being "on the spectrum" and needed special services. Without Medicaid, there would be no way he could get those. He is now thriving and doing so well.

My second son was born under high risk conditions, as well, and I feel so fortunate to again have such wonderful insurance that makes sure anything medically necessary is covered without any worries whatsoever. It fills my heart to know that there is hope. Medicaid has always given me that hope and I seriously don't know what I would do without it. I will never take it for granted.

– Monique, Willoughby, OH

Both my parents received Medicaid in New York in their later years. They went into assisted living and skilled nursing facilities after heart surgery and Alzheimers.

They spent all their money saved over many years and relied on Medicaid at the end. The care they received was excellent at an excellent facility.

– Neil, Hamilton, OH

Over the course of my adult life I have had many different kinds of health care coverage. For the first eight years of my son's life we were covered by Medicaid. We were both healthy during this time, and for myself, I know that was in part due to the peace of mind that having Medicaid there to take care of our health needs gave me.

For a decade I have had a high deductible employer based plan with an HSA. I have managed on this, but let me tell you this is not the answer to the health care needs in this country. Just this year I switched to an ACA plan. The ACA plan and Medicaid are the best health care plans I have had and that includes nine years with very good employer based insurance in the 90's.

We need to continue to improve our health care system, so that everyone is covered in a way that allows us peace of mind and the ability to get preventative, cost effective, timely health care.

– Lindie, Yellow Springs, OH

I used Medicaid when I was a single mom, I was not getting good child support. My sister worked since she was 16 years old. She is now 49 and disabled. She needs her Medicaid to pay for her surgeries and her Dialysis.

– Tammy, Toledo, OH

I have an eight-year-old autistic, nonverbal son and without his Medicaid we would be unable to provide for him the care he needs to live a productive and healthy life.

I am grateful every day to Medicaid especially when he uses his augmentative device we were able to get through his health insurance.

– Kat, Cincinnati, OH

I was born to a 19-year-old single working mom. She struggled to afford food and a home to live in. I vividly remember organizations and churches bringing food to our home and did not understand why. Our heat or electricity often would be turned off because she could not afford to pay the bills. Going to a doctor for regular check ups was a luxury.

If I was sick, I really had to be sick to justify going to a clinic for care. My mom eventually received Medicaid. The peace of mind to be able to have access to healthcare for your child was something I would not fully appreciate until I worked in the healthcare industry and became a mom myself.

This is not a benefit that should be reduced or altered in a way that could put kiddos and their parents at increased risk. A parent should never have to decide if affording food for the week is more important than taking their child to a clinician for medical care. These are the people that need support the most.

– **Vanessa, Columbus, OH**

OKLAHOMA

As someone with MS, and a thyroid cancer survivor, I've used Medicaid in both California and Oklahoma. I've been on Medicare since 1998 when my MS required more expensive tests and medications.

Now, Medicaid in Oklahoma helps with my co-pays for Medicare. I can't imagine what I would do without both programs.

– **Robin, Oklahoma City, OK**

I am a single mother of three. I am also disabled. I'm on a fixed income and could not afford health care. We live below the poverty level. I could not afford to take them to the doctor or go myself.

Medicaid makes it possible for my children to go to the doctor and get the health care they need: shots, dental, eye care. Without Medicaid we would not be able to go and my children's quality of health would decline.

– **Christy, Eufaula, OK**

"Many more children will become ill and require expensive hospitalization if they lose their access to healthcare."

**Bronwyn,
Portland, OR**

OREGON

As a pediatric physical therapist, I work with many children and their families. If they did not have government assistance for their health care needs, they could not keep their children – and we tax payers would be paying much more for their care in state funded facilities. This is one more example where cutting one program will greatly raise costs in another.

– **Jill, Sisters, OR**

My father's only income is social security and a very small pension. He has Alzheimer's, and is in memory care. Without Medicaid, he would have no where to go. Medicaid pays for his bed and board. We pay for his toiletries, medications, and clothing. At 90, he is physically stronger than he was a year ago. He still knows us, but doesn't always know what the relationships are. He is losing language rapidly.

My mother passed away 15 months ago; he only has myself, my partner and my brother for family. We are not able to provide the care that he needs: assistance with toileting; assistance with dressing and general hygiene. A 24 hour watchful eye and locked door to make sure that he doesn't wander off in his wheel chair.

Medicaid makes his care possible, and gives him a modicum of dignity.

– **Avery, Portland, OR**

I am a pediatric hospitalist, caring for many of our most vulnerable and ill patients in the hospital. Many of these patients would not have access to care if it were not for Medicaid programs. Many more children will become ill and require expensive hospitalization if they lose their access to healthcare. In addition, my own mother just recently had a pre-cancerous polyp removed from her colon. She would not have been able to afford the doctor's visit and colonoscopy procedure if it were not for her Medicare coverage.

Instead, she would've developed full-blown colon cancer and it would not have been caught or treated until it was too late. Not only would this have been a tragic outcome, but also would've cost our healthcare system – and taxpayers – far more. It makes sense to take care of our citizens' health. Not only is it the humane thing to do, but it is financially healthier as well.

– **Bronwyn, Portland, OR**

Twenty six years ago I was playing pool in a bar when a man came in beating up his girlfriend. I told him to stop, he hit me and I went down, hitting my head on the floor and pool table. I was head-injured. After surgery and months at a VA hospital I was admitted to a nursing home, then moved on to a residential care facility. From there I moved to an apartment for the head-injured. All these were paid for, in part, by Medicaid. I have served on many boards and committees since then and have become a productive member of society which would not have been possible without Medicaid. Perhaps I would not have survived.

– **Edward, Eugene, OR**

I am a recently divorced (after over 20 years) mother of two children. I suffer from severe migraines and without medicine would not be able to work. I started a sole proprietor landscaping business to support us because our town has very few living wage jobs (despite me having a masters degree) and I want to keep my kids in the same schools during this

transition. Unfortunately I cannot afford to pay for healthcare until my business is more profitable.

Knowing I can get medicine and care for myself and children lifts a huge burden and allows me to work toward a better future. I am a struggling single parent trying to care for my family.

– **Claire, Bend, OR**

The fellow I hired does not have health insurance, and I cannot afford to get it for him. Because of Medicaid, he went to the dentist for the first time in at least ten years.

– **Charles, Corvallis, OR**

I am supporting my adult daughter, who is unable to work due to a disease which causes chronic pain. She has OHP (Oregon's Medicaid), which backs up the private health insurance I purchase for her at some expense. The help provided is critical, as it covers co-pays and helps with the already great expense I have.

– **Laurel, Portland, OR**

I live on Social Security Disability and have both Medicare and Medicaid. Because I have multiple chronic medical conditions requiring both frequent office visits, medical tests, and expensive medication, if I did not have Medicaid I do not know that I could afford to eat. Without my medication and the ability to visit my physicians as needed, my health would deteriorate drastically.

My income is less than \$1050 per month, and even with Medicaid, I have had to make many decisions to cut things out that are important to me, because I simply cannot afford them. As it is, I live in subsidized housing, which I also fear will be cut along with my food stamps. If that were to happen, it is likely that I would end up on the street, or in a state institution. Thanks, but no thanks.

Medicaid provides a crucial safety net to me, and many others who would otherwise not get the care they need. Additionally, my mother lives in an assisted living facility, thanks to Medicaid. My family does not have the resources to give her the care she needs outside of that option, as she requires 24 hour care

due to both her dementia and physical medical problems.

I do not know what would happen if Medicaid were to be cut. Would they put her on the street too? She is 86 years old and paid high taxes her entire working life. She deserves to be cared for.

– **Martina, Salem, OR**

My little sister, aged 76, lives off the grid, raises as much of her food as possible and lives entirely off of her SS check. Her well-educated background means that she is managing very well in most situations.

BUT, with lymphoma now dogging her every step and osteoporosis in the picture, she is dependent upon Medicaid for any medical expenses that rise above the most basic costs. She saves in order to pay whenever she can but major expenses are simply beyond her means.

– **Priscilla, Terrebonne, OR**

PENNSYLVANIA

For me it's simple. With Affordable Health Care I get to live a relatively comfortable life. Without it I would perish. I was diagnosed with numerous autoimmune conditions at the age of 13. I've never been insurable until President Obama pass the Affordable Care Act. At times when I could work I had employer provided health insurance.

At 57 my back blew out due to severe stenosis. The condition has left me with little ability to walk constant pain anytime's and inability to even care for myself. I was covered by Medicaid until my SSI disability was approved. Since there's a two-year waiting period for Medicare I have to pay for my own insurance for the next two years. Without the Affordable Care Act I would not be able to afford insurance where would I be insurable on my own.

– **Barbara, Bridgeville, PA**

I worked for WIC program. 60% of my WIC clients were Medicaid beneficiaries. WIC collaborated with Medicaid provided preventive health services for pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding women and children under five years old. The preventive health services were important for ensuring a healthy life trajectory

of those children, so that they will not predisposed with chronic diseases. Thus, in the long run, Medicaid will save our healthcare costs.

– **Rayshiang, Hershey, PA**



Patricia, Chalfont, PA

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in September 2015 - because I had Medicare, I was able to have a lumpectomy in mid-October and radiation treatments from December 20, 2015 to January 20, 2016. In late 2015, I also qualified for Medicaid. Without these two, we now would be bankrupt due to the very high costs of my treatments.

Because of Medicare AND Medicaid, I now am cancer-free and have continued my life without being burdened with high medical bills. In 2001, my husband had open heart surgery - a double bypass - and a pacemaker installed. Again, without his Medicare, we would have been bankrupted by those enormous medical bills. He's doing fine these days, at age 84, still VERY active and enjoying life.

I survived a hemorrhagic stroke that initially left me completely paralyzed from the neck down on my dominant side on January 23, 2013, at the age of 39. I didn't have insurance at the time as I couldn't afford it. Even though the hospital helped me put in for Disability, I didn't get approved until 2.5 years and an appeal later. In the meantime I had zero income and had to rely on Medicaid. Thank God for that as I wouldn't have had any access to the ongoing healthcare and physical/occupational therapy that I'm still in need of.

– **JT, Sellersville, PA**

RHODE ISLAND

In 2004, I nearly lost my husband to pneumonia - a common, treatable illness. I was in grad school, working a low-wage, part-time job at night; he was self-employed; we'd just bought our home and my stepson was preparing for college. We couldn't afford health insurance. I watched with helpless horror as his (undiagnosed) symptoms worsened, his fever climbed; his breathing became nearly impossible and his pain unbearable.

Still, unable to speak, choking, he'd grab my hand when I tried to dial 911 - he knew the medical bills would shatter us financially, and was willing to gamble with his life. We made it through that nightmare but no American family should have to face its like. We are better than this.

- Katya, Providence, RI

I have been on Medicaid and Medicare since I was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy and was accepted onto social security disability insurance. I had to wait for 2 years before I could get on Medicaid. Without Medicaid I will not be able to go to the doctors that I need to see. I ended up in the hospital and the ambulance had to take me there. I have no idea how I could even do that without Medicaid.

- Sharon, Wakefield, RI

When our mother had to go to a nursing home due to her increasing dementia and inability to care for herself, it was possible only because of Medicaid. Neither she nor her children had the financial resources for the extensive care she required. Thank goodness this program is available. I would hate to think of the dire circumstances of many families without it.

- Theresa, Wakefield, RI

SOUTH CAROLINA

I lost my job in May 2016. While my two children qualified for Medicaid through SCHIP, my husband and I only qualified for family planning services through Medicaid. The ACA has enabled us to purchase affordable healthcare that covers all of our existing and potential

future needs, which is a huge load off our minds.

- Christa, Simpsonville, SC

My daughter works as an Occupational Therapist for a Pediatric Therapy company that treats medically fragile children and sensory needs children. Many of the patients and their families receive treatment with the help of Medicaid. Life is stressful and challenging enough for these families, but the feeding therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy that these children receive give their families HOPE. Single mothers and grandparents are some of her patients best support systems.

Secondly, how would the business be effected if families no longer could come for treatment due to no Medicaid coverage. Many OTs, PTs, are working multiple jobs as it is to pay off the student loan debt they incurred in achieving their advanced degrees necessary to become licensed therapists. Gutting Medicaid could hurt my daughters job security at her current company.

- K Hassen, Mount Pleasant, SC

SOUTH DAKOTA

My son was born with a congenital birth defect. He also has developmental disabilities. Medicaid & ACA are vital for life saving guidelines. I'm in the same boat. I'm a rape victim & DV survivor.

- D., Watertown, SD

My daughter and her husband were struggling with low paying jobs and no benefits. She is a college graduate with a degree in pre-professional biology. He works in construction or as a waiter as opportunity presents. They have 2 very young children. Because of Medicaid, they were able to get health care for their children while she continued her education.

Now she has a good paying job at a hospital in the medical laboratory and is paying taxes that she is glad to pay, hoping someone else will be able to take care of their family while getting the training and education they need. Medicaid made this possible for her. Without it,

they would not have been able to pay for her schooling and care for the children.

- Dorna, Sturgis, SD

TENNESSEE

Shortly after I was signed up for TennCare I began having gall bladder attacks. I had spent fifteen years with no medical care, using public hospital emergency rooms for absolutely necessary care. I could not have afforded the surgery without TennCare and would have had to endure these miserable, exhausting attacks permanently without the surgery I so badly needed. I am grateful that my psychiatrist was so caring as to see that I could qualify for the new TennCare plan and got me to sign up. I have had excellent (and cheaper for the tax-payers) care ever since.

- Cheryl, Memphis, TN

TEXAS



Laura, Colleyville, TX

I am the mother of two boys. My older son has various diagnoses that have required us to receive a Medicaid waiver in order for us to provide him proper medical care.

Without these services my son could face a fatal reality. Every child, every person is worth every cent! I am advocating for all medically fragile children and their families as well as anybody who has a pre-existing condition.

My only child died; CPS took his 3 children away from the neglectful mother and now I have custody. Without Medicaid, they wouldn't ever see a doctor, dentist, or get glasses. The oldest girl has stage 4 endometriosis, among other diagnoses. The youngest child has mental issues; one Rx is \$1,056 per month. That's more than my monthly income. They have no health care w/o Medicaid.

– **B, Belton, TX**

My daughter Elizabeth, who is almost 24 suffers from hypotonic cerebral palsy, seizures, plus other issues. She uses a wheelchair. She is non-verbal and wears diapers. Beth requires total assistance. I have been her primary caregiver for most of her life. That is, until about three years ago. I'm a retired U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant. I'm also a disabled veteran whom is unemployable due to my multiple medical conditions. My health took a turn for the worse three years ago and I could no longer care for my daughter. So Beth went to go with her father. However, his career and family life changed drastically during this time. His new wife couldn't cope with having Beth around. They eventually moved to another city. The stress level within the family was overwhelming. It was decided to put Beth into a nursing home.

My beautiful, young daughter with a constant smile was placed in a facility for old people. But the nursing staff is very kind to Beth. They try to make her as comfortable as possible. Medicaid is the only way we can afford her living there. It pays for the facility's use, her wheelchair, feeding pump, adult diapers, medicines, and medical care. How would my daughter survive if it weren't for Medicaid?

Her father and I are both veterans and tax payers. I served in the Air Force for 20+ years. We have never shirked from our responsibilities. I need to know my daughter will be taken care of long after I'm gone.

– **Sandra, Humble, TX**

My niece is a disabled adult with Down's syndrome. Her apraxia also means she is unable to speak. Her level of disability is high, so she will never be self-support-

ing or even able to take care of herself without guidance and assistance. She depends upon the support she receives from Medicaid. Her parents are working, middle class Americans who require assistance in providing the full-time care and guidance that their adult daughter requires.

– **LeeAnn, Houston, TX**

My late aunt spent her entire working life with a publishing company which declared bankruptcy in the 1970's, the remains of which were purchased by a large, diversified manufacturer.

As a result she received only a portion of her pension, and as she developed dementia her savings were exhausted. Had she been unable to rely on Medicaid, her later life would have been spent in far sadder conditions.

– **Ron, Irving, TX**

My husband is in skilled nursing for life. He is 97 years old, a World War II veteran. I cannot take care of him at home. He is in a wheelchair whenever he is not in bed. If Medicaid is cut, what will happen to my husband?

– **Susan, Richardson, TX**

My daughter has brain cancer. She is 44 years old with 3 children. She is not able to work because her radiation is between 80 and 100 thousand, her chemo pills 8 thousand for 6 weeks. Not counting the cost of 2 surgery's on the brain. How does a family recover from the financial cost?

– **Sue, Frisco, TX**

UTAH

I have Multiple Sclerosis. I was living in California when the ACA went into effect and was greatly benefited by it. But in 2014 I had to return to Utah to live with my family, and lost this vital resource, as Utah was not a Medicaid expansion state.

My disease was progressing and I had to go through a great deal to be finally deemed by an administrative law court judge disabled enough to be enrolled in Utah Medicaid. I am now SSDI disabled, but won't be eligible for Medicare for another year.

I am afraid for myself, and worry that I won't be able to get the disease-modifying drugs (such as betaseron, Avonex, Tecfidera, etc.) that really do slow down the disease (and are tremendously expensive), not to mention the MRIs, blood tests, and neurologist visits that tell me how my brain is doing amidst all the onslaught of the disease.

Medicaid has enabled me to remain involved in the lives of my friends and family (and care for my mom, who is 71 and had a brush with death last year), to have the wherewithal to work part time, and be a contributing part of my neighborhood and community.

I can still walk, but I despair at the thought of losing my healthcare, because I will surely stop walking sooner without it.

– **Leigh, Lehi, UT**

VERMONT

When my mother was diagnosed with lymphoma in June 2012, Medicaid saved her life. Though she worked a good job full time, the hotel she was an auditor at had dropped their health benefits when a new company took over management. I could not add her to my plan.

Without Medicaid, she would not have been able to get treatment. Fact, her first oncologist wanted to let her for, and since other doctors fought to save her, I cannot help but wonder if he was motivated by a lack of sure Payment. Other doctors fought with her, and when Medicaid came through, so did she.

– **Annegret, East Hardwick, VT**

Yes, our family of four has been on Green Mountain Care, here in Vermont, which is a Medicaid program. Because my husband and I are both self-employed, he a Forester and I a gardener, our income put together falls into the eligibility category for this insurance. Vermont has many self-employed people, and Green Mtn. Care has allowed them to maintain their businesses, as well as support their medical needs.

I shudder to think of a country where only the wealthy can afford health insurance. That would be an awful day! If our government heads in this direction, they

can be sure to hear the roar of thunder from millions who will be standing up to fight for their rights, their human right to health care.

– **Karyn, Hartland, VT**

VIRGINIA

When my mother was diagnosed with lymphoma in June 2012, Medicaid saved her life. Though she worked a good job full time, the hotel she was an audited at had dropped their health benefits when a new company took over management. There was no ACA and I could not add her to my plan.

Without Medicaid, she would not have been able to get treatment. fact, her first oncologist wanted to let her for, and since other doctors fought to save her, I cannot help but wonder if he was motivated by a lack of sure Payment. Other doctors fought with her, and when Medicaid came through, so did she.

– **Tara, Norfolk, VA**

Healthcare is a very important subject to my family right now. My husband has several preexisting conditions and as recent as this past Friday we received a letter stating he had been approved for Medicaid In our state.

This letter was very important to us because living on my husband's monthly disability check doesn't leave any money to to pay the remaining 20% of his medical bills that Medicare Disability does not cover. The past due notices and letters from collection agencies have piled up.

Being on Medicaid there are many benefits offered that Medicare doesn't for example getting free rides to and from his dialysis treatments 3 times a week. Some days I would worry about how he would get to and from his treatments because our car is very old and not at all reliable or we just didn't have money for gas.

Being on Medicaid will definitely help with our situation. Being on Medicaid will surely help make healthcare more affordable for my family and many others in the same position.

– **Darlene, Stafford, VA**



Aimee, Midlothian, VA

My son has a seizure disorder. He seizes multiple times every day. This has caused extreme developmental delay and cognitive impairment. My husband has a job with good health insurance but even so Medicaid has been vital to us. The copays on my son's seizure medications are hundreds of dollars a month, as are the copays on his therapies. Medicaid covers these. It also pays

for a respite caretaker for him which is necessary for my family's wellbeing. When you have a nonverbal child with seizures you can't just hire a random babysitter you need someone who knows him and is trained. Also, with the new AChA I am terrified of how my son will be cared for when he is aged out of his father's insurance. Medicaid is necessary to sustain his life.

My son is autistic and has been on Medicaid since he was a baby. Without it we couldn't afford his appointments and medications. So this is really important to me that Medicaid doesn't lose funding.

– **Stephanie, Java, VA**

Without Medicaid, I could not have in-home and community support. I am disabled. I was born with high-functioning autism, mild cerebral palsy, and mild epilepsy. I am disabled, on Medicare and Medicaid.

– **Lori, Norfolk, VA**

I am white. I am from a middle class family. I have a bachelor's degree. I am happily married. I planned both of my pregnancies. I have two beautiful girls. And my family of four are all on Medicaid. Medicaid does not hand out free healthcare to the lazy of our society. Medicaid members are from all different backgrounds and walks of life, working hard and contributing to our society. My husband is a full time graduate student working to become an Episcopal priest, while I raise our baby and toddler.

We live entirely off scholarships and life would be incredibly hard without the

support of Medicaid. We already pinch pennies as it is. Our 3 month old baby might not exist if it wasn't for Medicaid. Once my husband is out of school, he will be in a higher paying job and we will be happily contributing to the social programs, like Medicaid, through our taxes.

– Laurie, Alexandria, VA

WASHINGTON



Heathir, Enumclaw, WA

Both my adult children have Crohn's Disease. My son also has Ankylosing Spondylitis, he receives Remicade every 6-weeks which costs \$10,500 per dose. My daughter just came out of remission after almost 9 years. She also has psoriasis. I rely on Expanded Medicare to cover me and both my kids rely on it as well. The ACA has literally saved their lives. They can't go without medical care!

My son was born 32 years ago, 14 weeks premature. That was before all of the great medications premies get to boost their lung power. As a result, he has chronic lung disease. Also, as is often the case with premies, he is on the autism spectrum. He was also diagnosed with diabetes at 24 years of age, not because he was over-weight, but maybe because of the steroids that he and I were give before and after he was born to boost his lung power.

Because he was born before autism was even recognized as a "thing" to the federal government, he has never gotten any kind of disability. Presently, all he gets is Medicaid, and that's because he is part of the expansion population in Washington State.

– Elise, Olympia, WA

My dad was a WWII veteran and a corps of engineers retiree. When his Alzheimer's was progressing and my mom's full time job couldn't support his care needs any longer, Medicaid was do critical.

Although it couldn't reverse the course of Dad's Alzheimer's, it did provide him the nursing care and dignity he needed and deserved while my mom had to give her long goodbye. I fear the sole responsibility of caretaking would have destroyed my mom and I would have lost both parents.

– Sara, Tacoma, WA

My mother worked six days a week most of her life and raised three kids with zero government help. Now she is in a nursing home on Medicaid. If she did not have this coverage, she would literally die.

– Ivy, Arlington, WA

My grandmother, when she was 88, was admitted to a nursing home and when her money ran out, she was put in a "Medicare" room. She would have been out on the streets had she not had Medicare.

Like so many women who have worked at jobs with modest pay for their whole lives, she did not get enough in social security to sustain a roof over her head and 3 meals a day.

A cut in Medicaid will affect older women disproportionately. It will hurt many people, many of whom are older women in their last years.

– Jane, Oak Harbor, WA

My developmentally disabled daughter is helped by Medicaid. She has multiple medical issues including epilepsy and diabetes. She would not be able to get the ongoing medical help she needs without Medicaid.

– Jean, Seattle, WA

"I was a successful film editor until I was struck with a sudden illness. I never knew before how vital social services such as Medicaid can be for those of us who have been disabled by illness."

**Kimberly,
Seattle, WA**

I am a physician who cares for pregnant women. Our country needs to support our children's nutrition beginning in utero if we want to have a healthy, optimally functioning society. My brother is disabled from mental illness. He is unable to work and has difficulty with the most basic of tasks.

His Medicaid assistance helps provide him with medication to stabilize his condition which keeps him from being put in jail because of disruptive behaviors. This saves money and hardship for everyone.

– Marie, Olympia, WA

I was a successful film editor until I was struck with a sudden illness. I never knew before how vital social services such as Medicaid can be for those of us who have been disabled by illness.

Medicaid helps to keep my medical expenses manageable and allows me to work forward toward recovery in the hopes that I can rejoin the workforce!

– Kimberly, Seattle, WA

Over forty years ago my husband and I adopted special needs siblings from the state. I gave up my profession of pediatric nurse to care for them as a full time mom and homemaker. At the time they were covered by health insurance from my husband's employment. Their needs were many including traveling out of town to see specialists and also special counselors to meet their psychological/emotional needs.

When they reached adulthood and became more independent, it became necessary to apply for disability income and Medicaid. With some supportive supervision they are able to be on their own but there is no way as a widow now approaching the age of 80 that I could afford the health insurance they require in their mid life and beyond.

- Marie, Walla Walla, WA

My mother used to live independently but was hospitalized a month ago and has been in a nursing care facility ever since. She can no longer live alone, is in debt, and we can't take her into our home, nor can we pay for the care she needs. We are currently applying for Medicaid for her long-term care in an assisted living type facility. It would be a disaster for her if she couldn't get the help her husband had received before he died.

- Liz, Seattle, WA

All three of my daughters work with the elderly in assisted living institutions or nursing homes. Without Medicaid, many of those people would have nowhere to go. Has it come to the place that our society wants to get rid of them?

As a senior, I will most likely soon need care that my working family cannot give me. I am terrified that the current government will take away the help that would allow me to survive with assisted care.

- Karen, Walla Walla, WA

My Grandmother received Medicaid for the last five years of her life, until her passing at age 96. It improved her life in so many ways; making it possible for her to stay in her own little apartment with the assistance of home care providers, allowing her some semblance of inde-

pendence even in her declining health. She received wonderful palliative care from her doctors, including treatment for her reoccurrence of breast cancer and eventually hospice care.

Without the assistance of Medicaid she would have had no choices in the end of her life. Her small social security check alone (that she paid into well into her 70's) would not have afforded her the luxury of choices; her living situation, her doctors, etc. It allowed her a tiny bit of dignity in her final years.

- Whitney, Duvall, WA

I'm a single mom. I was a stay at home mom and on my spouses insurance, until I had to call the police on my husband for physically abusing me. Now me and my six year old son, who is on the autism spectrum, have health insurance because of Medicaid. Not only our physical health, but we have used for mental health from PTS and to stay healthy. We would be hurting without it.

- C., Seattle, WA

Health care matters to my family because I don't get health care through my job so if I don't have Medicaid my family would get our regular check up to stay healthy.

Recently my 3 year old has had chronic ear infections and a mild hearing loss without medical attention through Medicaid we would have the insurance to get ear tubes put into both his ears and he would still be suffering now, 2 weeks ago he was approved for surgery and is feeling much better.

- Sherri, Federal Way, WA

I have two children who are both on Medicaid. When I had my firstborn, who is now almost 3, I originally went back to work; even though I had always wanted to stay home with my children, I worked, at a low-wage job that barely covered the cost of childcare, because I was the only one who had medical coverage. My husband worked for a small company that did not offer medical benefits. After a few months, I decided that being away from my son was too much of a sacrifice, and we'd find another way to get health insurance. So I left my job to stay home, and we started getting coverage through

the Affordable Care Act.

In Fall of 2016 I had my second child. Both my son and my daughter are covered by Medicaid, since our family income is not very high. I'm very thankful for both the ACA and Medicaid. I dread the thought of being forced to go back to work and let somebody else raise my children (not to mention that I'd probably again barely make enough money to cover that cost), just so that we can have health insurance.

- Steffany, Bellingham, WA

My granddaughter will be 4 next month, in March 2017. She was born with a condition called arthrogryposis which affects the muscles in her arms, legs, and back.

My son and his wife work hard but struggle to make ends meet. They would not be able to provide for their disabled daughter without Medicaid. We must provide for those in our society who are less fortunate than others.

- Susan, Olalla, WA

Until about three years ago I had no medical insurance of any kind and had developed a very serious condition that if unchecked would have put me at an extremely high risk for a stroke and possible heart failure. Because I was able to get Medicaid I was able to get treatment and dramatically reduce my risk levels. Without Medicaid I might not even be alive to write this.

- Richard, Seattle, WA

WEST VIRGINIA

My mate is currently on Medicaid. He lost his job back in 2014 and found a new job in November, 2015. However, this was a part-time employment but offered no healthcare benefits, therefore he was forced to sign up for Medicaid.

Currently he gets all of his blood pressure medication and healthcare through Medicaid and is afraid that if it is removed his life and health would be in jeopardy. Affordable and acceptable healthcare should be for all, not just the wealthy.

- Sara, Charles Town, WV

WISCONSIN

I know several people who depend on Medicaid. One with schizophrenia and several with moderate to severe autism. Some are able to work just part time, if at all.

– Anette, Madison, WI

My husband was very sick for a number of years before he received diagnosis or effective treatment. During that time, he became unable to work but had no answers, and I worked several part-time jobs at a time to string together a living while also being home enough to care for him and my children.

Without Medicaid, I would not have had healthcare for myself or my young daughters, one of whom suffers from severe chronic asthma, when he became unable to work. Without Medicare, he would not receive treatment for his illnesses, which have finally, after about 10 years, steadied out to where they are not in constant crisis mode. I have amazing children who will do great things in the world, and I work in education.

We depend on these healthcare programs to keep our family healthy, and to contribute to our overall ability to give back to society. If people are in constant financial and health-related crisis, we have no resources for anything else.

This is why healthcare coverage is so important for Americans – when our basic needs for physical health are met, we can concentrate on the other contributions we can make to our world.

– Allison, Madison, WI

My son was born with Down Syndrome that lends itself to chronic medical issues. He was not able to get private medical insurance for many years due to his pre-existing condition. He had major surgery at 9 months old and continuing medical issues for several of his childhood years.

Now at 33 years old, he is covered by his step-father's insurance, at least until his step-dad retires in 6 years. Then he will be back to using Medicaid as his primary insurance.

– Dawn, Racine, WI

My daughter is a single mom. She got pregnant soon after high school. She worked part time but was not provided health insurance with her job. However, she was able to get health care through Medicaid, for herself and her baby. She went back to college and earned a Bachelor of Science degree. Now, she has a full-time job and her son is a healthy, happy five year old. She will soon be eligible for healthcare benefits through her job.

This would not have been the outcome if she had not been able to get health care through Medicaid for the time that it was needed. She did not become “dependent on the system,” but instead used the help to be better able to take care of herself and her son.

– Susan, Monroe, WI

Okay my husband is black and he can't do very well without his medicare and Medicaid and for that matter neither can I we both have asthma but he has other serious health problems that are important

and we both have pre-existing sickness.

He's had all his toes taken off of his left foot and two or three from the right foot. Some were due to accident's. Bad swelling in his legs. And problems with his hands. So that is why we both need our government insurance. We pretty much depend on it.

– Sharon, Milwaukee, WI

I have family and friends who are on Medicaid. They would love to get back to work but can't. Why cut their benefits and life line. The members of Congress are the ones who should have their “SALARIES” and “BENEFITS” cuts. God knows they are not working or doing their jobs to be collecting a salary, which we, the AMERICAN people are paying for...

– Thomas, Shorewood, WI

WYOMING

My husband and I both received our Bachelors degrees when our first child was 6 months old. My husband went on to receive his Masters and Doctorate degrees. Unfortunately, due to the economic crisis of 2008, when he needed to find employment, he was unable to get the type of job he was 3-degree trained for.

He now works by the hour to support me and our 7 children, each of whom have health issues requiring daily medication. Our medical bills are extremely high, even with Medicaid supplementing the younger children's medical costs.

– Mary, Laramie, WY

**To learn more about our stories or to contact our staff
please contact: felicia@momsrising.org**

MomsRising.org is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.

MomsRising is working for paid family leave, flexible work options, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many others. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, and breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start.

Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America's families. In 2012, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row. In 2013, Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its "Best of the Net" list.