

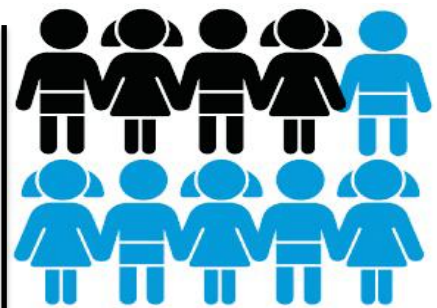
Together for Medicaid

Medicaid: A Lifeline for Maine Children

Defeat of the American Health Care Act opens the door to a more hopeful and constructive conversation about how to improve America's health care system. The AHCA would have taken us backwards costing Maine \$1 billion over the next 10 years,¹ placing thousands at risk, including nearly half of Maine's children, and reversing two decades of historic gains in children's health coverage.

We encourage policymakers to come together to make health care more affordable and accessible to all. We are also mindful that some of the most dangerous provisions of the AHCA may reappear. It is essential to recognize and appreciate the strong role that Medicaid plays in protecting Maine children and to understand proposals that would significantly undermine the program.

MaineCare (Maine's Medicaid program) and its companion program, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), provide coverage to more than 130,000 Maine children.²



Four out of 10 Maine children can see a doctor when they get hurt or sick thanks to Medicaid.

The assault on Medicaid: How did Congress propose to undermine the program?

Today, the Medicaid program is a true partnership between the federal government and the states. In Maine, the federal government pays 64 cents for every Medicaid dollar spent under our state's MaineCare program. The federal government shares more of the cost for sicker people with higher health care costs and less for healthier people with lower health care costs.

This would have changed drastically under the AHCA, which imposed a "per capita cap" or "block grant" on Medicaid. These dangerous funding schemes would have ended the federal commitment to pay for the care that each eligible child needs, ratcheting down overall funding and shifting costs to states and individuals.

¹ http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2017/rwjf436077

² <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/1586-children-participating-in-mainecare?loc=21&loct=2#detailed/2/any/false/870,573,869,36,868/any/11727,3379>

The size of these cuts would have grown over time, leaving states like Maine with one of three bad choices: cut health care services, cut enrollment, or cut payments to health care providers — each one leaving Maine kids without needed care.

To balance budgets in the wake of these cuts, policy makers would face untenable choices between providing care to children in foster care, pregnant women, older Mainers that need residential or home care, working parents, adults with serious mental illnesses or children with disabilities. Federal funds simply would no longer be there to serve them all.

Why Medicaid matters to Maine’s kids:

- The percentage of Maine children **with** insurance has increased by nearly 50% over the last two decades, thanks to Medicaid and the related SCHIP.³
- 6 in 10 Maine newborns get a strong start during their critical first year of life because they receive care through MaineCare.
- Medicaid helps children grow up to reach their full potential. Children enrolled in Medicaid do better in school; are more likely to graduate from high school; grow up to be healthier adults; earn higher wages and pay more in taxes as adults.⁴
- Medicaid is the backbone of Maine’s behavioral health system, providing behavioral health treatment and services for children from birth until they are 21, including children with developmental disabilities/delays, intellectual disability, Autism Spectrum Disorders and mental health disorders. MaineCare makes their lives better.

The critical link between parent and child health care coverage:

Research shows that there is an important link between parent and child health care coverage. Maintaining Medicaid coverage for parents has a direct impact on their children’s coverage. When parents lose coverage, their children tend to go without coverage, even if they are eligible for coverage through programs such as Medicaid.⁵ Children also need healthy parents or guardians to raise them.

If we want Maine to have a prosperous future, we need our future generation to remain healthy so they can reach their full potential. Protecting and strengthening Medicaid is one of the most valuable investments we can make. Not only is it a foundational source of health coverage for Maine children, but also an investment in their future and ours.

Medicaid: Lifeline for Children is sponsored by Maine Children’s Alliance, Maine Women’s Policy Center, Maine Equal Justice Partners, and Maine Community Action Association.

³ <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/99/5/e2.long>; <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7757-children-without-health-insurance-by-race-and-ethnicity?loc=21&loct=2#detailed/2/21/false/573,869,36,868,867/10,11,9,12,1,185,13/14951,14952>

⁴ http://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Medicaid-at-50_final.pdf

⁵ http://www.mekids.org/assets/files/issue_papers/healthcoverage_children_2014.pdf