

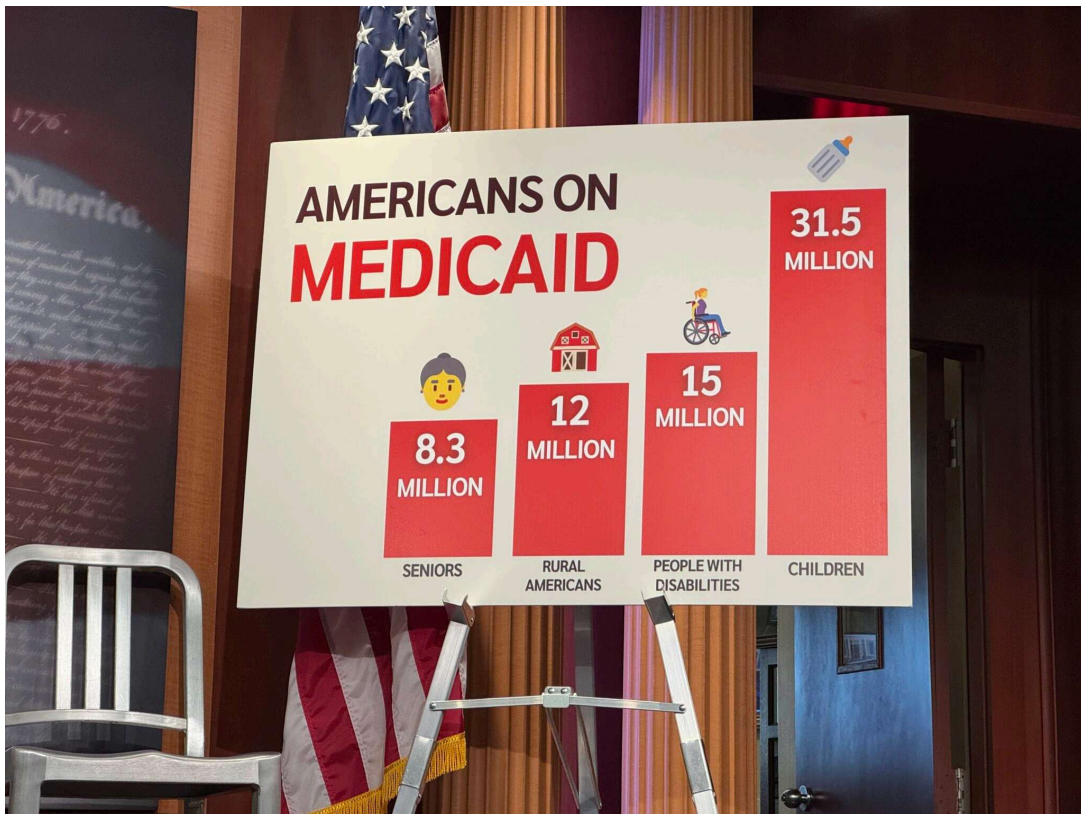


COMMENTARY

Medicaid enables fulfilling livelihoods in Ohio and across America

| SHELLY JOHNSON

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📷 Medicaid sign at a press conference. (Photo by Shauneen Miranda/States Newsroom)

I was born with Muscular Dystrophy, I've always been in a wheelchair, and I've always held a job. Medicaid Buy-In supports my healthcare needs and enables me to remain employed.

Many think Medicaid is simply government-subsidized health insurance, but for me, and millions of others like me, it is so much more. It allows me to live independently in a home that I own. It pays for modifications like a ramp and roll-in shower that make life's routines easier.

Most importantly, Medicaid pays the wages of my caregivers who support my personal care needs and household tasks. As a 59-year old, it enables me to stay employed, leave the house, and live a fulfilling life. Without it, these things would be impossible because I would be stuck in bed with no one to care for me.

Congress is currently considering significant cuts to Medicaid. The House and Senate have passed a joint budget resolution, calling for the House Energy and Commerce Committee to make \$880 billion in cuts and the Senate Finance Committee to make \$1.5 trillion in cuts to its programs – requiring large cuts to Medicaid.

Currently, House and Senate committees are working to decide where and how much to cut. Any cuts or barriers to enrollment will have cascading impacts across the United States, putting the health and independence of Medicaid beneficiaries at risk.

For those of us living with neuromuscular diseases, Medicaid allows us to plan for long-term care.

If Medicaid suffers funding cuts, the consequences will be significant. We will likely face delayed treatments, be unable to afford life-saving medication, and have increased difficulty affording the homecare assistance that we need to be healthy and fulfilled.

Medicaid is a pathway to better health outcomes, financial stability, and an overall higher quality of life. Preexisting health care issues, like lengthy home care waitlists, nursing shortages, and hospital closures are likely to follow as well, compounding the negative impacts.



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Affordable and adequate health care is not a luxury; it's a necessity. As the single-largest source of health insurance for Americans, it covers 72 million Americans.

I am one of nearly 3 million Ohioans who rely on Medicaid daily. In Columbus and across Ohio's 3rd Congressional District, where I live, 23.9% of our residents are enrolled in Medicaid – compared to the national average of 22.7%. This increased vulnerability puts many beneficiaries at risk of life-altering consequences.

I deeply fear for the outcomes of others who depend on the service. It covers 2 in 5 adults with a disability, 2 in 5 births, and 2 in 5 children. Whether or not you are on Medicaid, chances are that someone you love needs it.

Potential cuts will directly or indirectly impact nearly every single Ohioan. As Congress moves forward deciding what pieces of the federal budget get cut, I hope that Medicaid remains safe.

For many Ohioans, there are no other opportunities to receive the health benefits, services, and treatments that we need besides Medicaid. If cuts are made, we will have to make difficult decisions about how to pay for the healthcare we need.

I need Ohio U.S. Sens. Moreno and Husted to know that the lives of real Americans like me and so many others are in real danger if Medicaid budget cuts are enacted. Ohioans rely on Medicaid to live fulfilling and free lives. Please act in the best interest of those you represent.



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