



Background

Medicaid is the federal-state partnership that provides health care for low-income children and expectant mothers, as well as both basic health care and long term services and supports for people with disabilities and low-income seniors. In 2014 Health Reform will allow the parents of kids on Texas Medicaid today to get coverage, too (only a few qualify today).

Over 58 million Americans and 3.5 million Texans rely on Medicaid services and supports every day.

When we think about it, we all know people who benefit from the Medicaid program. For example:

- Do you or someone you know use Medicaid long term services and supports to live in the most integrated setting, with appropriate services?
- Do you or someone you know use Medicaid to cover prenatal care to ensure a healthy pregnancy and baby?
- Do you or someone you know have kids who are getting the health care they need because of Medicaid or CHIP?
- Do you or someone you know work as a direct care attendant, providing critical support services?

How We Began: My Medicaid Matters in Texas

On September 21st, 2011, National ADAPT organized the **MY MEDICAID MATTERS** rally in Washington, DC, co-sponsored by 94 national organizations representing people with disabilities, seniors, children, labor, civil rights, women's rights, gay and gender rights, the religious community as well as other human rights advocates. The purpose of the Rally was to send a message to the "Super-Committee," Congress and the Obama administration that Medicaid is a critical safety net program for millions of Americans.

In Texas, over 35 organizations organized by ADAPT of Texas, CTD, Texas Advocates and The Arc, held a press conference that same day to support the goals of the rally in DC. Today, our Texas organizations continue to work

together to provide a unified voice in support of a strong Medicaid program that will continue to meet the needs of millions of Texans.

“My Medicaid Matters” Texas – Outreach and Education Campaign

Our Goals:

- Educate Texans, Texas legislators, policy-makers and Congress about the real people whose health, independence, families and jobs are supported by Texas Medicaid: children, mothers, Texans with disabilities, seniors—and the workers and professionals who assist them every day.
- Monitor and STOP damaging cuts, block grants, waivers, or caps that will harm Texans and our families in our communities.
- Advocate for access to decent health care and community-based services and supports.
- Tell our leaders that deficit reduction and sustainable budgets MUST use a balanced approach that includes revenues and does not rely on cuts alone. Without new revenues in the mix, Medicaid, CHIP, and Medicare cannot avoid devastating cuts.

Mission:

- Inform policymakers and the public about the benefits of Medicaid and what could happen to Texans if Medicaid were reduced or eliminated.

What does Medicaid pay for?

Many Texans don't know that Medicaid pays for hospital and physician services; medical and surgical care; nursing facility services; lab and x-ray services; check-ups, dental, and shots for kids; mental health care, physical and speech therapies, and nurse practitioner services.

It also pays for critical community services and support, like:

- Home and community-based waiver services; home health; personal attendant services; rehabilitation services and therapies; and other services that allow seniors and people with disabilities to live and receive services in the community.,
- Prescription medications, optometrist services and eyeglasses, prosthetic devices, and other community-based services and supports.

Every Texan relies on Medicaid, because it is such a major support to our health care system.

What's happening in Washington and Austin?

The Congressional “Super Committee,” comprised of six Senators and six Representatives, were unsuccessful in their attempt to reduce the federal budget by \$1.5 trillion over the next ten years. Though Medicaid funding was not part of the automatic cuts that may occur, Medicaid funding cuts and program restructuring are still very much on the table. The reason this threat remains is that many members of Congress refuse to consider any increases in revenues that will be necessary to fund the needs of the growing population of those eligible for Medicaid, CHIP, and Medicare services. All these programs are vulnerable to deep cuts that would harm people by reducing critical health care and community-based services and supports.

In Austin, the 2011 Texas Legislature imposed roughly \$2 billion in Medicaid-CHIP cuts, and left the Medicaid program under-funded by another \$5 billion, which will have to be made up in 2013—or cut even deeper.

The legislature also passed two new laws proposing major restructuring of Medicaid. One new law directs HHSC to seek a capped-funding federal Medicaid waiver, that would exempt Texas from minimum standards in federal law for who Medicaid covers and what health care they receive.

The second law directs Texas state government to seek permission from Congress and the President to “opt out” of Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP, and to convert all of Texas’ federal health care funds into a single block grant based on 2010 funding levels. If Congress approved, it could **end** federal rules about which children, seniors, pregnant women, and Texans with disabilities get covered, along with rules guaranteeing basic standards for health care benefits.

TALKING POINTS: for Individuals and Families

- **“MY MEDICAID MATTERS”**— Describe why the Medicaid Program is important to you and your family.
- **“CUTTING MEDICAID HURTS PEOPLE”**—Describe what would happen to you or your family if you lost your Medicaid benefits.
- **“CUTTING MEDICAID HURTS BUSINESS”** – For every \$1 cut from Medicaid almost \$4 of business activity is reduced.
- **“PROTECT THE MEDICAID PROGRAM”**—Ask Congress, Texas legislators, and policy-makers to protect the Medicaid Program because it matters to you and millions across the country.

- **“SLASHING MEDICAID” - Means eliminating jobs, which will hurt the economy by pulling billions of dollars in health care spending out of our Texas communities.**
- **“MEDICAID HAS BROAD PUBLIC SUPPORT” - According to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll, 60 percent of Americans want to maintain Medicaid and only 13 percent support cuts to Medicaid.**

OUR MESSAGE: Health, Independence, Families, and Jobs!

Medicaid is more than just health coverage. Medicaid means:

- **Health!** Medicaid provides hospital, doctor and other health services to low income families, children, people with disabilities, and older Americans.
- **Independence!** Medicaid provides vital home and community-based services that allow seniors and younger people with disabilities to live independently in the community.
- **Families!** Medicaid provides services that support families in caring for their children, including children with significant disabilities.
- **Jobs!** Medicaid provides vital jobs for direct care workers, therapists, health care professionals, and other workers—and helps them to support their families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[Bob Kafka](#), ADAPT of Texas, 512 442-0252 bob.adapt@sbcglobal.net
[Amy Mizcles](#), The Arc of Texas, 512 454 6694 amizcles@thearcoftexas.org