

Protect Women: Protect Medicaid

Since Pennsylvania expanded its Medicaid program in 2015, more than 700,000 Pennsylvanians have gained health coverage. The majority of new enrollees are women. As a result, more women than ever have access to affordable health care. Women also make up a majority of the people who are getting traditional Medicaid coverage, which covers pregnant women, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and very low income parents. Medicaid helps women and families maintain stable and healthy lives.

Congress is currently considering a bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The bill would roll back Pennsylvania's Medicaid expansion, while creating per capita caps, or per-person limits, on traditional Medicaid funding. It would create new red tape to make it harder for families to get and keep the Medicaid coverage they need. These cuts to Medicaid would harm Pennsylvania women and families who rely on Medicaid to access health care when they need it most.

Speak out! Tell your U.S. Representative to protect women's health by protecting Medicaid. Ask your Representative to oppose the bill to repeal and replace the ACA. To find your Representative, please visit <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/> or call the U.S. House of Representatives switchboard at (202) 225-3121.

- ❖ **Medicaid ensures women access to affordable health care.** Medicaid provides women with comprehensive health care coverage. Medicaid covers critical women's health services such as treatment for cervical and breast cancer, as well as long-term care. Medicaid also provides women with important access to family planning resources. Women can access contraceptives with no co-pays and have a choice of family planning provider. Medicaid provides women with access to prenatal care to ensure safe and healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. And when women have stable health insurance, it is more likely that their children will receive consistent health care.
- ❖ **Women rely on Medicaid for preventive care.** More women Medicaid enrollees in Pennsylvania use preventive health services than men who are enrolled in Medicaid. [According to Pennsylvania Department of Human Services data](#), well over half of Pennsylvania women who have Medicaid received preventive care during the first year of Medicaid expansion. Preventive care services include mammograms and pap smears.
- ❖ **Medicaid provides economic stability for women and families.** Women are less likely than men to have health insurance through their jobs. Many low-wage women working to support their families receive health insurance through the Medicaid program. For families struggling to make ends meet, Medicaid makes it possible to get medical care without having to choose between paying the rent or electric bill and paying for doctor's visits or medications. Medicaid prevents economic instability by eliminating unexpected catastrophic medical bills due to emergency room visits or hospitalization. The Medicaid program also supports health sector jobs largely held by women. Investing in Medicaid is an investment in women and families.



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- ❖ **Threats to Medicaid put women's health at risk.** Women are at particular risk of harm from cuts to the Medicaid program. In Pennsylvania, and across the country, women are enrolled in Medicaid at higher rates than men. Fifty-five percent of the individuals who gained coverage through Medicaid expansion in Pennsylvania are women. In fact, Medicaid covers 16% of all women in Pennsylvania. Many women rely on Medicaid for health care to stabilize their families, especially when dealing with domestic violence, loss of employment, or catastrophic health problems. Reducing Medicaid funding will result in women losing access to affordable health care and put women and families at risk.
- ❖ **Medicaid helps survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.** In addition to physical injuries from abuse, survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault often suffer from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addictions resulting from self-medicating the pain of abuse in the absence of other resources. They may have chronic pain, gastrointestinal disorders, and an increased rate of gynecological problems. Abuse may escalate during pregnancy. For women who are survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault, Medicaid can be a lifeline to medical treatment.
- ❖ **Medicaid is important for older women.** Older women rely on Medicaid to stay healthy. They rely on Medicaid for preventive services like mammograms and for treatment of medical conditions including breast cancer. Older women also rely on Medicaid for home and community based services, so that they can get the care they need and stay at home in the community. Women who need nursing home care rely on Medicaid for coverage.
- ❖ **Congress's proposed bill to repeal and replace the ACA would result in devastating cuts in Medicaid.** Congress has proposed freezing enhanced federal funding for Medicaid expansion starting in 2020. After 2020, states could cover new enrollees, but they would get much less federal funding. Most states would be forced to stop offering coverage due to budget reasons. Women would be disproportionately harmed, because a majority of Pennsylvanians covered through Medicaid expansion are women.

Congress is also considering imposing per capita caps on federal funding for the traditional Medicaid program. Through per capita caps, the federal government pays states a fixed amount to cover each Medicaid enrollee based on a formula. Funding would be significantly less than current federal funding, and less than Pennsylvania's actual health care costs. Increases in future years would not keep up with health care costs. State losses would increase every year, adding up to billions of dollars over time and creating state budget shortages which would force states to reduce covered services or the number of people who qualify. Because women are the majority of traditional Medicaid enrollees in Pennsylvania, the deep federal cuts would inevitably lead to drastic reductions in services or coverage for women.



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