



Preserve Medicaid, Americans' Only Long-Term Care Safety Net

Introduction to the Medicaid Program

Medicaid is a national public health insurance program funded by both the federal government and states and operated at the state-level. Medicaid pays for health services and long-term care for low-income Americans, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. To qualify for Medicaid, individuals must meet certain income limits set in place by the federal government and by states, as well as other requirements. Approximately 60 million Americans rely on the Medicaid program for the care, treatment and services they need, including long-term services and supports.

Why is Preserving Medicaid Important to Long-Term Care Consumers?

- **Medicaid Remains the Largest Single Payer of Long-Term Care in Our Nation**

Medicaid pays for roughly half of all long-term care in the United States and nearly 50% of all nursing home costs. Sixteen (16) million seniors and people with disabilities—1 out of every 4 people—rely upon Medicaid for their long-term care needs!

- **Medicaid is the Only Way Most People Can Afford Long-Term Care**

Long-term care is extremely expensive. According to a 2012 Met Life Survey, the average annual cost of nursing home care was \$90,520 for a private room and \$81,030 for a semi-private room. Few people can afford these rates for very long or at all. If they don't have enough money or run out of money, many individuals will turn to Medicaid for assistance. For these consumers, Medicaid is the only option for receiving the long-term care they need.

- **Medicaid Allows Long-Term Care Consumers to Stay in Their Homes**

Medicaid helps nearly one out of five individuals stay out of nursing homes and receive the services and supports they need at home.

- **Medicaid Pays for Services Not Covered by Medicare and Private Insurance**

Unlike Medicaid, Medicare and standard private insurance plans do not cover ongoing, long-term services and supports, such as helping someone to dress, bathe, walk, eat, take medications, prepare meals, do the laundry or grocery shop. In fact, Medicare only pays for a very small amount of nursing home care – and does not pay for assisted living at all. Although there are a limited number of private long-term care insurance plans that do cover these services, fewer than 10% of older adults have purchased such policies. For these reasons, Medicaid remains the only coverage option for the majority of individuals that cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket for long-term care.

- **Medicaid Helps to Ensure Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes**

Medicaid establishes standards for more than 16,000 nursing homes and requires annual inspections that help to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens. Decreasing Medicaid funding would reduce inspections and quality assurance in nursing homes, making residents more likely to suffer neglect and abuse. In addition, reductions in federal funding for Medicaid would likely result in less staffing at long-term care facilities and even lower worker wages – both of which would hurt residents' quality of care.

The Consumer Voice Urges Congress to Protect the Traditional Structure of Medicaid and to Reject Any Medicaid Funding Reductions that would Harm Consumers' Access to Quality Care

For more information on this issue,

please visit <http://www.theconsumervoice.org/advocate/medicaid>

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