

NORTH CAROLINA FAMILIES WANT YOU TO PROTECT MEDICAID!



**Stories from families across
North Carolina about the critical need
to protect Medicaid**

Dear Lawmaker,

We are a coalition of organizations who represent thousands of North Carolinians across all 100 counties of the state.

The stories in this book will show you the critical role that Medicaid plays for families and communities in North Carolina. Access to affordable health insurance through Medicaid is crucial for seniors, children, families with low incomes, pregnant women, and people with disabilities. In 2023, we passed Medicaid expansion with broad bipartisan support, and it has been one of the most significant and impactful pieces of legislation in recent memory. In a little over a year, over 630,000 North Carolinians enrolled in Medicaid expansion, demonstrating the widespread need for this program. We are asking that you honor this legacy and preserve this achievement by protecting Medicaid.

The funding cuts being proposed at the federal level would disrupt care in all communities across the state. Medicaid provides affordable coverage to 1 in 4 North Carolinians and 24% of all North Carolinians who rely on Medicaid live in rural counties. Cutting or rolling back Medicaid coverage would shift the cost of Medicaid onto our state budget, potentially forcing cuts to other critical programs like schools and public safety while also increasing state taxes. Medicaid supports our businesses, workforce, and economy—and must be protected!

In addition, Medicaid is critical for our rural communities—and not just for those who use the insurance program. Medicaid expansion has brought much needed dollars to rural hospitals who were struggling financially, which helps to attract and retain health care workers as well. In most cases, these hospitals are the top employer in their area, so losing any of this funding could negatively impact the whole community, including leading to the hospital closing. Rural communities also face greater health care challenges with higher rates of chronic disease, tighter hospital budgets, and provider shortages. Medicaid cuts would only exacerbate these issues, leaving rural communities with more sick people and fewer options for care.

On top of all this, Medicaid is a popular program supported by voters across the political spectrum. We are all stronger and healthier when everyone has access to the care they need.

Please protect Medicaid!

Action NC

MomsRising

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

National Nurses Organizing Committee/
National Nurses United

Care Share Health Alliance

North Carolina Black Alliance

Carolina Jews for Justice

North Carolina Aids Action Network

The Center for Community Transitions

North Carolina Council of Churches

Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy

North Carolina Justice Center

Disability Rights NC

North Carolina NAACP

Down Home NC

North Carolina National Organization for Women

Health Care For All, NC

Pisgah Legal Services

Health Care Justice North Carolina

Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry of North Carolina

Indivisible Asheville/WNC

Indivisible Guilford County

"I am 41 years old and I live in Burlington, North Carolina in Alamance county. I am originally from New York, the Hudson Valley to be exact. My family and I moved to Alamance County back in 2016. I'm married to a very hard-working man named Tim and we have four awesome kids! Liam who is 18, Joseph who is 11, Emma who is 8 & Frankie Jane who is almost 6! Our 11-year-old son Joseph, has a dual diagnosis. He was diagnosed with ADHD and DMDD around the age of seven. If you are not familiar with DMDD it is an explosive behavior disorder that stems from depression and anxiety. This disorder comes with a medicine regimen & often is misunderstood. DMDD is a diagnosis that also affects the child's entire family. It makes it very difficult for the child to make and keep friends as they have a tough time with interpersonal relationships. Joseph has escalations that could typically last an hour or more. And when he is escalated, it is hard for him to become de-escalated. Joseph is a bright, kind AWESOME kid & just wishes more people understood his disorder.

For many years, even prior to his dual diagnosis he was in therapy. Due to us having private insurance, we were paying upwards of \$200 per week for co-pays for everyone in my family who was in talk therapy. \$200 a week in co-pays is really not sustainable for anyone who is working class or poor. Along with talk therapy Joe was also recommended for intensive in-home therapy. Unfortunately, due to us having private insurance we could not access that resource for Joe and for the health of our entire family. For five long years we dealt with not being able to access intensive in-home therapy. I do believe that this set Joseph's remission back many years.

At the beginning of 2024 my husband lost his employment. We were then finally able to apply for Medicaid. Intern we were then able to access intensive in-home therapies for Joseph. So far Joseph has made amazing progress, he is learning tools to help him cope with his disorder. My entire family could not be more thankful & grateful for being able to access this REQUIRED mental health service. I personally believe that health coverage is a right as American citizens, not a privilege of the wealthy. North Carolinians deserve to be covered under Medicaid. YOUR Constituents and neighbors urge you to ultimately oppose any bill that threatens to cut, restrict or cease Medicaid coverage for the over 1 million people you

RURAL COMMUNITIES — RELY ON — MEDICAID



24% of North Carolinians covered by Medicaid live in rural counties

SOURCE: NCDHHS

represent. Thank you so much for taking the time to read this and I hope you make the right decision for your fellow North Carolinians!"

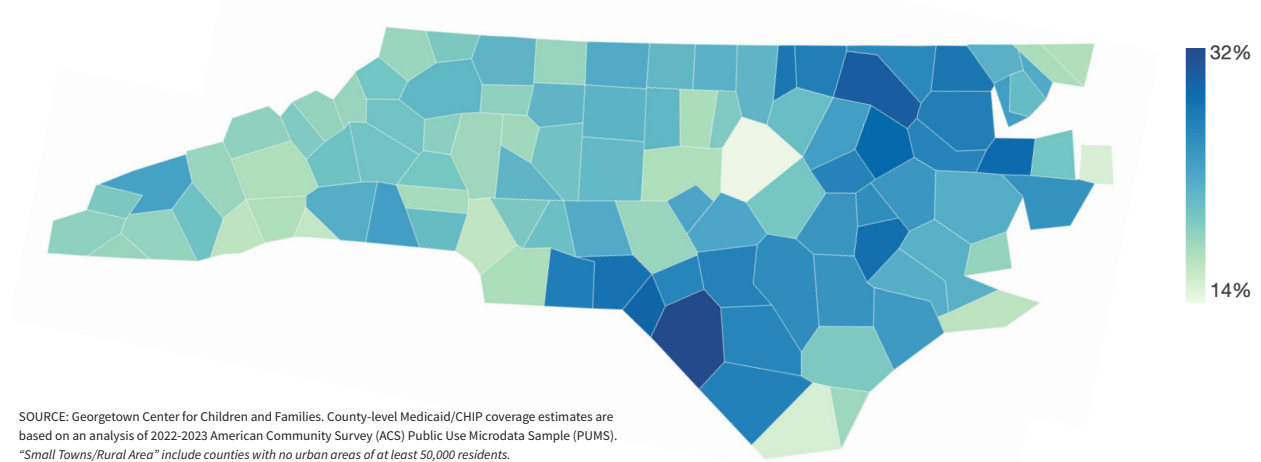
– **Theresa, Alamance, County**

Jenifer has serious health complications, including a brain injury. She had been denied for disability SSDI multiple times between 2020-2023, and she desperately needed affordable health care. She was relieved when Medicaid expanded, after being without insurance for 3 or 4 months after being divorced. She hopes that she won't need to be on it for her whole life, but it's needed at this time.

Her adult children are now also enrolled in NC Medicaid, who both have health problems and work full time. Jenifer has had three previous heart attacks, and recently she went to the ER because her hand was numb. A scan detected a tumor in her head. She's seeing a specialist in Winston Salem now, and fortunately her care is covered by NC Medicaid through the expansion.

– **Jenifer, Ashe County**

Medicaid Coverage in Metro and Small Town / Rural Counties in North Carolina, 2023



"Have been paying out of pocket for medications and so Medicaid will help to pay for my medications and is less expense. Getting older now."

– B, Beaufort County

I have been uninsured since losing my job and wasn't sure what options I had available. I quickly applied for Medicaid and should be able to keep seeing my doctors.

– M, Beaufort County

When Henry's aging parents became sick and needed help, he had to leave his blue-collar job to become their sole caretaker. Losing his income and then his health insurance left Henry with very few options for medical treatment and, like so many, he delayed critical care, which impacted his quality of life and well-being.

Henry found out he was eligible for Medicaid expansion at Agape Health Services, a community



health center, where he sought care for a dental issue. After not having insurance for years, being able to get health coverage has changed his life.

Thanks to Medicaid expansion, Henry regained access to vital healthcare services, including routine check-ups and medications. This gave him the support and peace of mind he needed to care for his parents without sacrificing his own health. His story highlights the life-changing impact of expanded healthcare access for hardworking individuals and families. "I can't and don't want to imagine what my life and my parents' life would be without this Medicaid help. It has made such a difference in how I feel and how I am able to give them the care they deserve. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

– Henry, Beaufort County

"I had fallen and hurt my knee, and gone in for an x-ray. Coincidentally, the x-ray showed my hips and lower abdominal region as well. It also showed a golf ball sized mass in my abdomen. My orthopedist immediately sent me for a referral to a gynecological surgeon. I went for surgery within a month, and the tumor was already the size of a grapefruit, and had adhered to several organs. It was growing rapidly, and would have caused severe malformation to my kidney, bladder, and other organs had it not been removed. The surgery was more invasive than

doctors had originally anticipated, and I had to stay in the hospital for several days. Recovery at home took weeks.

The only reason I was initially able to see a doctor was because I had Medicaid at the time. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have know about the tumor until it had grown exponentially, and become more of a threat to my life than it was. Because I had Medicaid coverage at the time, I was able to see a doctor, get a referral, seek treatment, and go on about my life. That x-ray was 26 years ago, and I've never forgotten how grateful I was to have coverage to see a doctor."

- Sharon, Buncombe County

"I am a Black Mountain resident devastated by Helene. I'm very satisfied with being able to have Medicaid."

- S, Buncombe County

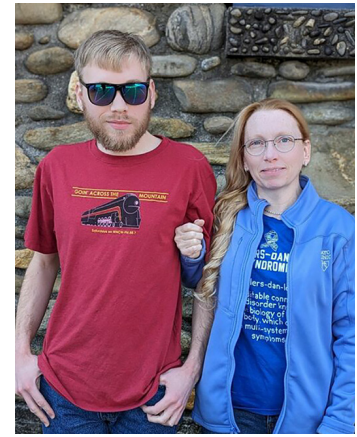
"All three of my children have been on Medicaid since they were born until a year ago. As a NC teacher, my children have always qualified for Medicaid until I hit year 12 on the salary schedule. Thank goodness they have, because I don't know how we ever would have been able to afford giving birth, much less keeping our children healthy and whole. Raising three boys is no easy feat, but raising our children is the most precious gift in life.



Recently, WNC was devastated by Hurricane Helene. My husband has worked as a farm manager for the past 6+ years. During Helene, the farm he managed was almost completely washed away by Flat Creek and the Broad River. This has left him unemployed and our family is exceptionally burdened by medical costs. Medicaid is a lifeline, quite literally. We cannot afford to lose Medicaid."

- Shanna, Buncombe County

Surrey is in her mid 50s and lives in Black Mountain, NC, along with her adult autistic son, Seth. She often talks about how life can change in an instant. Not that long ago, she had a comfortable life. Then, she was diagnosed with a rare and at times truly debilitating triad of conditions: mast cell activation syndrome, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, and dysautonomia. Suddenly, Surrey had to make trips to the Mayo Clinic and find multiple specialists closer to home.



As a result of the serious symptoms, she was no longer able to work, or some days even function. As her health declined, she was no longer able to work. Just as her income was dropping below the threshold for ACA subsidies, North Carolina's Medicaid expansion program went into effect. She often calls Medicaid expansion a blessing, as just one of her mast cell stabilizer medications costs about \$1,000 a month without insurance.

Too many people end up not seeking treatment because they can't afford it, their conditions get worse, and they end up in the ER, with a huge medical bill. I have been there. Please know that this health coverage doesn't just make a difference, it makes THE difference in people's lives. Health care is not a partisan issue. It is a human issue.

- Surrey, Buncombe County

"Medicaid isn't about a 'free ride.' It's a lifeline for people like me who physically can't work due to serious health conditions." Lori has always worked hard to support herself - taking on jobs such as a



Lori wants people to know that Medicaid isn't a handout – it's a lifeline for people like her who physically can't work anymore. Lori's autistic grandson relies on her for care, so staying healthy is a top priority.

– Lori, Cabarrus County

circus master, pizza maker, and in other roles around her community. But when her health began to decline, work became increasingly difficult. Through North Carolina's Medicaid expansion, Lori enrolled and was immediately able to see a primary care doctor. To her surprise, tests revealed two tumors, one of which was affecting her eyesight. She also has a growth around her optic nerve that, without Medicaid, wouldn't have been diagnosed until it was too late, and she lost her eyesight. "If I get cut off Medicaid now, I won't be able to get treatment. I'll just have to deal with whatever happens." Having Medicaid coverage has given Lori a fighting chance at managing her health without leaving her family in financial ruin.

This isn't the first time Medicaid has proven to be a vital lifeline for Lori. In 2024, she nearly lost a finger to an infection, and without coverage, she would have been forced to risk leaving it untreated. Instead, she was able to see a doctor, get antibiotics, and have surgery to save her finger. She knows that without Medicaid, she would be drowning in debt or might not have survived at all.

"Out of a sense of duty, I would have stayed home instead of going to the hospital, and that might have cost me my life." Lori wants people to know that Medicaid isn't a handout – it's a lifeline for people like

her who physically can't work anymore. Lori's autistic grandson relies on her for care, so staying healthy is a top priority. Her extended family provides support and they all know it's critical to protect Medicaid. It's not just about her—it's about ensuring that those who truly need care don't have to choose between their health and their survival.

– Lori, Cabarrus County

"I receive extra help thru Medicaid to pay my Medicare Part B cost. I think it is \$189 per month. If they stop my Social Security and Medicare, and Medicaid extra help, it will be devastating since my only income is social security."

– B, Cabarru County

Josh is a 33-year-old social, funny, and kindhearted person who has never met a stranger. He loves making people laugh and thrives in his community. But he also faces significant challenges due to Fragile X Syndrome and



moderate intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). He relies on Medicaid's Innovations Waiver for in-home care, day supports, and other essential services that allow him to stay active and engaged. Despite difficulties, Josh's mom Laura expresses deep gratitude for the enormous positive impact Josh has had on her life.

"Medicaid provides a lifeline because nine out of ten times, people with disabilities have more medical needs that most of us wouldn't be able to afford," says Laura, Josh's mother and legal guardian.

Josh struggles with safety awareness, and his tendency to wander has been a constant concern for his family. In 2024, Laura requested a home security system through the Assistive Technology, Equipment, and Supplies (ATES) service to help ensure his safety. The system allows his family to track his movements

and provide him with an alternative way to call for help in an emergency.

After months of persistent advocacy and negotiations the security system was provided, ensuring Josh's safety at home.

For Laura, this victory was about more than just a security system. It was about facilitating Josh's independence while keeping him safe. Medicaid also provides him with access to community programs, a gym membership, and other essential services that help him live a full life.

"Without Medicaid, we'd lose all his community-based services. It would be hard. I have to work, so this gives him an opportunity to go out and socialize with his own peers," she explains.

Laura has become a fierce advocate, challenging misconceptions about Medicaid and disability support. She knows firsthand that these services aren't luxuries—they are necessities.

"All Medicaid does is allow us the opportunity to give our children the ability to be a part of their community, be seen, be heard. And there's nothing wrong with that," she says.

With his mother's love, the support of his community, and the vital assistance of Medicaid, Josh continues to live a life filled with laughter and connection. Laura remains steadfast in her fight, not just for her son, but for all families navigating the same journey.

"Parents like me shouldn't have to fight so damn hard to make sure our kids are taken care of," she says. And yet, Laura makes it clear she will never stop fighting."

– Josh, Cabarrus County

"As my husband and I prepare for our baby's arrival, we've been filled with both excitement and worry. Being hard workers, we've always done our best to provide, but the rising cost of healthcare had us wondering if we could afford the care we needed. That's when everything changed.

I'm most looking forward to knowing my baby will be well taken care of. With the coverage we have now, I don't have to worry about how to afford prenatal care. Having health coverage has been a lifeline—it's the peace of mind we didn't know we needed. It's



1 IN 4 NORTH CAROLINIANS RECEIVE AFFORDABLE HEALTH COVERAGE FROM MEDICAID

SOURCE: Georgetown CCF

one less thing to stress about, knowing we won't have to choose between our baby's health and putting food on the table.

I'm so grateful for the support we've found. As we look ahead to the arrival of our baby, I feel relieved, knowing we're covered and that we can focus on what matters most: our growing family."

– Nadezhda, Cabarrus County

"Despite being hard workers, my family has been having a hard time keeping up with inflation and the rising costs of medical care. If it weren't for Medicaid we would have struggled to pay bills and delayed medical care or other necessities like we have in the past. Having coverage has made such a difference, we will now be able to make our rent payments. We are so grateful!"

– A, Cabarrus County

"I got Medicaid because it's important for me and my 8 year old son to have medical insurance. I moved to

NC in January and I am currently looking for work."

- K, Caldwell County

"I need help for my family. If I wasn't disabled I would still be working at least part time. I am presently in need of multiple surgeries in the near future as well as kidney failure. I have kidney disease and am quickly approaching kidney failure as per my blood work. I can't afford to have these surgeries and possible dialysis without the help of Medicaid."

- D, Carteret County

"Medicaid has helped tremendously with my chronic disease. Costs of prescriptions and surgery are affordable and without Medicaid I would not be supported."

- S, Catawba County

"If I didn't have Medicaid I don't know what I would do! I have several doctors I go to and about 20 prescriptions that I rely on Medicaid to help me with. Thank God my copay is only \$4 each! I really pray that our Medicaid is not cut! It would literally kill me!"

- Deborah, Catawba County

"We live on Social Security paycheck to paycheck. My partner qualified for Medicaid due to low income and Cancer disability. If we lose Medicaid, we lose United Healthcare Dual Complete and lose healthcare completely. We could not afford any insurance otherwise and would probably go bankrupt."

- C, Cleveland County

"Young, low-income parents such as my daughter cannot afford health care. I have seen my daughter struggle with numerous health concerns and put them off at the expense of her health because she could not afford medical care and did not want to burden her dad and I even though we have offered. Once most moms in our county are no longer qualified for Medicaid, they do not have any health coverage."

- L, Columbus County



"As a pediatric hospice nurse, children I care for on Medicaid are the only ones who consistently are able to receive life prolonging treatments in addition to the robust support hospice provided thanks to Concurrent Care. Without fully funded Medicaid, many medically complex children will not be able to receive the support they need most in their last months."

- Allie, Craven County

"I am gaining health insurance for the first time through Medicaid expansion. I am very excited to have vision services and dental care through Medicaid in addition to medical care. It's taken a huge weight off of me - it means more financial security for my family. I can now see a doctor when I get sick instead of having to delay or deny care."

- C, Cumberland County

"I don't have insurance, my parents don't have insurance, so getting Medicaid will be a huge benefit to me. Outside of student insurance during undergrad, I've never had insurance before."

- J, Durham County

"My mother is type 1 diabetic and needs insulin to survive. My mother is a senior and retired nor should she be expected just to have access to the medicine she needs to stay alive."

- Kathryn, Durham County

"Cuts to Medicaid and Medicare means doctors make less per office visit than 10-20 years ago while at the same time Medicare payments to hospitals have grown substantially. This has driven most doctors including myself into corporate medicine for large hospital chains which then drive up costs further..."

– William, Forsyth County

"It has been over a year since I had Medicaid. I have many procedures that cannot be done with the type of health insurance I have now. I am very glad to have Medicaid. I was found eligible and that has made me feel much more relieved about getting the care I so desperately need."

– R, Forsyth County

"I can take better care of myself. That's huge, now I can get my eyes checked, and see my gynecologist and take care of other preventive care. It's been years since I've been to the doctor. If something happened, I couldn't afford to do anything about it."

– M, Forsyth County

"Cuts to Medicaid and Medicare means doctors make less per office visit than 10-20 years ago while at the same time Medicare payments to hospitals

have grown substantially. This has driven most doctors including myself into corporate medicine for large hospital chains which then drive up costs further and make corporate decisions based upon earning potential, leaving large parts of the community ignored.

Paying independent doctors fairly instead of a fraction of what hospital chains can bill for the same services will allow more competition to benefit patients and allow more decisions regarding health resources to be made in local communities where doctors live and work. Currently corporate executives in Charlotte or Atlanta decide where to offer clinics and hospital services rather than small town doctors somewhat in competition amongst local hospitals. Besides, funding Medicaid is a jobs program for rural America, keeping the small town offices and hospitals afloat."

– William (physician), Forsyth County

"It means peace of mind and security. It means everything to us to know that we've gotten insurance and every American should be able to have it."

– R, Forsyth County



"I am a lifelong resident of North Carolina. I currently reside in Franklin County where I have lived since 1994. I am reaching out to you today as a constituent who is extremely concerned about the proposed cuts to the Medicaid Program all over the country but especially here, in NC where we just passed a medicaid expansion bill not too long ago. I would like

to share a story with you so that you might be able to put an actual person to the issue at hand.

I am a wife, a mother, a daughter, and a sister. I am a hard worker having been in the retail industry for many years. My husband is also an extremely hard worker and began his career in North Carolina working for our state. My husband also, like many of our neighbors, has battled with diabetes for many years. After being employed with the State of North Carolina for fifteen years and having some of the best health insurance, his employment ended. Only being offered gap insurance from Cobra at an outrageous price, he had no choice but to try and stretch his medicines to last as they could because the prices were not within our budget as we were trying to survive off of my income alone.

Thanksgiving Day, 2013 was to be an extremely joyful day as we had all of our family together for one day to give thanks as many Americans do. I noticed that my husband wasn't feeling very well because he only wanted a small plate with just a little turkey and a small spoon full of potatoes. That is absolutely uncommon because my husband is a very healthy eater and a pretty large guy. We carried on through the day and tried to keep going even though we knew he probably didn't feel like having company.

A few hours later after all of our extended family left, my husband had gone to the restroom and was yelling for me to come and help him. He had zero feeling or strength in either of his hands and that is when I made him allow me to take him to the emergency room. When we arrived at the emergency room the triage nurse took his blood with a glucose monitor that did not register his blood sugar levels because they were so high. A blood draw was needed and we were told his glucose levels were over one thousand. The nurse said she was shocked he made it to the hospital before having a cardiac event or falling into a diabetic coma. Afraid and confused, my husband was admitted and thinking about the financial consequences when he should have just been grateful he was getting care and he was alive!

The hospital stay was seven days and the staff was able to get his blood sugar levels under control and set up a plan for him to stay healthy after discharge. During our stay, a social worker came by to visit and

"As working class people who have always done the right things, who fell on hard times, we can understand why Medicaid needs to be protected for all North Carolinians..."

– Ashley, Franklin County

told my husband that he may actually qualify for emergency Medicaid that would help to treat his chronic illness until he was able to acquire insurance on his own. He did in fact qualify and we were able to get him healthy and not have to take on the medical debt that most definitely would have caused us to be destitute.

I am so thankful that Medicaid was an option and that it sustained my husband's medical needs until he found employment within the year. As working class people who have always done the right things, who fell on hard times, we can understand why Medicaid needs to be protected for all North Carolinians for any reason. I implore you to vote against any bill that restricts, cuts, or ends Medicaid coverage for the over 1 million people you represent here in our beautiful state."

– Ashley, Franklin County

"I can get my insulin which is a life-sustaining medication for a cheaper price and I am super happy about that."

– B, Gaston County

"I would not be able to get treatment from a pulmonologist, podiatry cardiologist and medications,

etc., it has changed my life. The care that I am getting would not be possible without Medicaid."

– J, Gaston County

"I can get medical help that I could not get before and get medication as well. I am very happy I can take care of my medical needs now."

– B, Gaston County

"I'm 63 and self-employed in construction and have never had health insurance; happy to get coverage for the 1st time because I had medical expenses in 2024."

– M, Granville County

"I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker living in a rural county in NC. I have seen first hand how cuts to Medicaid affect my community, especially children and teens in foster care. I urge our state reps to preserve current funding and work to increase it as it is a vital resource for our rural counties."

– J, Granville County

"I am a physician who serves patients in Guilford and Rockingham counties. I have been fortunate to witness first hand the results of Medicaid Expansion in the rural areas of the state as well as the urban working poor. It has been transformational to say the least. We have been able to provide better, more consistent care that has allowed North Carolinians to live more prosperous, healthy lives.



The patients who have benefited from Medicaid Expansion have been less anxious and so overwhelmingly thankful for the ability to obtain affordable healthcare. Taking this away—especially during this impending time of job losses—would be

catastrophic to a large segment of the population."

– Joel, Guilford County

"I got Medicaid through Medicaid Expansion coverage, very much needed since I am going through cancer treatment."

– M, Guilford County

"I was paying \$100+/month for a Marketplace plan and I am now Medicaid expansion eligible. I'm starting a PhD program at UNC Chapel Hill in the fall and thought I would have to pay for student health insurance, so I am excited to save that money and about having dental and vision coverage."

– L, Guilford County

"Medicaid allowed me to get my medicine after leaving my job. It means a lot to me and allowed me to figure out I had deeper heart problems. I wouldn't be here today without the coverage so Medicaid expansion is excellent! If you aren't working or don't have a job, there wouldn't have been anything to help you without it."

– D, Guilford County

"Many of my closest loved ones are on Medicaid and they are so stressed about the possibility of losing it. They are all disabled and live in poverty because of their disability—post-polio syndrome, heart disease, CPTSD, severe hearing loss. I am asking you and the rest of Congress to stand up and do YOUR job—protect the constitution and care for all of your constituents."

– Lynn, Guilford County

"The Medicaid benefits would help with expenses, services and resources needed for my well being and mental health."

– A, Guilford County

"I have a lot of friends and clients with disabilities, and their inability to work typical jobs should not

disqualify them from traditional medical care. All their care, from check-ups to surgeries and prescriptions, is covered by Medicaid. A client with an intellectual disability here in Greensboro has been struggling with life-threatening epilepsy her whole life, and Medicaid covers her drugs and covered an implant that allows her to stop a grand mal seizure in its tracks. Without these treatments, she is isolated in her apartment, unable to access any resources."

- L. Guilford County

"Without Medicaid I would be in the same situation." Tamika doesn't take for granted how much her life has transformed since Medicaid expanded in North Carolina.

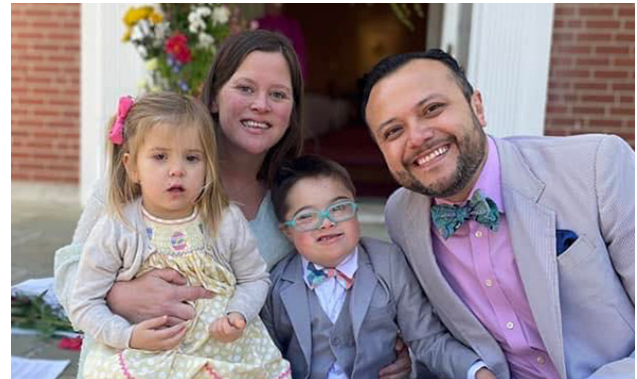


It often took two of her children to help her get to clinic appointments before expansion. Her coverage now includes transportation to doctor appointments and physical therapy that has helped her with her mobility. With Medicaid, she can manage her diabetes, heart condition and diverticulitis and without going into debt.

"I can get all my prescriptions at the same time without asking for financial help from my children. The bill from a 5-day hospital visit when I was very ill with diverticulitis was all covered and I could afford the medicine I needed when discharged."

Tamika can do so much more since having full health coverage under Medicaid including enrolling in college for the first time at age 52. "If I didn't have Medicaid, I would not be doing this. Everyone wants to do better in life and not be stagnant. Now I can get the help that I needed to push me into the dreams that I wanted. I can do so much more than I could a few years ago. I can walk on my own and play with my grandchildren. I don't have a lot of pain." Tamika will be graduating in the spring of 2028 with a degree as a mental health counselor.

- Tamika, Guilford County



"My son has received in-home nursing care for the last three years through a CAP-C terminal illness waiver. He has severe obstructive sleep apnea, asthma, and a floppy airway, along with other medical concerns. Before we were granted nursing care and Medicaid, it was very dangerous for Javi to attend preschool, as he was still small enough to nap during the school day and required oxygen whenever he was asleep.

Every time he started to fall asleep at school, I would have to leave work and rush to pick him up or apply his oxygen and sit with him while he slept. Once Javi had a nurse to go to school with him, they were able to get him on oxygen should he fall asleep, monitor his vitals, and help him get through the school day safely.

I'm so grateful for Javi's wonderful nurses and the waiver that provides them. They have allowed me to continue to work and contribute to my community while ensuring my medically fragile son is safe, healthy, and able to learn and thrive with his peers."

- Martha, Guilford County

"My 90-year-old mother is a long-term care resident of Emerald Health & Rehabilitation in Lillington, NC. She moved in May of 2022 after my siblings and I made the very difficult decision that it was not safe for her to



live at home any longer. She lived with my sister for 10 years, beginning when she started showing signs of dementia. For the last two of those 10 years, when my sister simply couldn't do it alone anymore due to the stress and difficulty it caused, my brother and I stepped in to assist in her care. Each of us rotated and cared for her in our homes. We did everything we could to avoid placing her in a nursing facility, trying to honor her wishes of not wanting to leave home.

After several falls and some tough conversations and once her dementia worsened, we made the most difficult decision of our lives to move her to Emerald. Since day one, her care there has been wonderful, and we are so grateful to the staff who are like family now.

My father was disabled starting in his late 40's due to heart issues and passed away at the age of 54 when I was 15 years old. My mother worked for decades in factories to provide for our family. She rarely missed a day of work. To this day, in her state of dementia, she will talk about having to go to work. I need to call her supervisor and tell him she won't be coming in today. She worries how she is going to pay the gas bill. She cries because she is worried I don't have lunch money or new shoes to start school. It's heartbreaking. My brother, sister or I go to visit her every single day in the nursing home. We are her advocates and are still devoted to her care, even though we can't provide it in our homes.

My mother deserves every penny she receives from Medicaid for her care. Again, she worked her entire life to provide for her family. She is not the 'parasite class' as Elon Musk once described people who receive assistance. The cost of her care at Emerald would be over \$136,000 a year if she had to pay out of pocket. There is no way she nor her family could afford this without Medicaid. It's simply not reality for most working class families."

– Sarah, Harnett County

"Having coverage is a huge weight off my shoulders. I was paying \$400/month for employer coverage I couldn't afford. I had no idea Medicaid in North Carolina had expanded to include adults 19-64!"

– T, Harnett County

"It has been some time since I have had health insurance and by me now being able to get health insurance, I can go to the doctor for physical, vision and dental."

– S, Harnett County



"Any cuts to Medicaid would be nothing short of devastating for my family and millions of families like mine."

– Mary Beth, Haywood County

"I live in Canton, North Carolina, a rural community outside of Asheville. I have custody of four of my grandchildren, ages 10, 12, 15, and 16, as their parents couldn't care for them due to addiction. Caring for my grandkids is an honor and a joy. They deserve the world, and I work hard to make sure they have everything they need to grow and thrive. But I'm trying to make ends meet on a fixed income, and it's never been easy. I work part-time, making \$8/hour to supplement my partial disability benefits. Especially as the cost of food and energy continues to rise, my family is barely making it. Sometimes I have to choose which bills to pay, or which essentials to cover. At times, I've had to skip refilling my prescription

medications so my grandkids wouldn't have to skip meals.

I've heard politicians talk about cutting programs like Medicaid, which is the reason I can take my grandkids to the doctor. Any cuts to Medicaid would be nothing short of devastating for my family and millions of families like mine. They would mean kids go hungry, families skip doctor's appointments or ration medications, and our children's education suffers. Our overall economy, too, would be harmed.

I don't understand why any lawmaker would threaten programs that make it possible for families to survive – but it is truly appalling to know these cuts are designed to make it possible to cut taxes for billionaires and corporations. Every day, I wake up and figure out how I will make it all happen for my grandkids. At times, I've worked 6 days/week to be sure they and what they needed. All I'm asking is for our elected leaders to also put the needs of our country's most vulnerable children and families first."

– Mary Beth, Haywood County

"My 34 yr old disabled daughter cannot survive without Medicaid: doctors, medications and services in the community: staff, day program, etc. I cannot work as nurse if these needs of hers are not met! Please help us by doing all you can to save Medicaid for her and all of her disabled peers that also depend on it for their health and well being!"

– Mary, Henderson County



"Medicaid has covered many of my family's health expenses, like the birth of all five of our children, healthcare for all five children, and prenatal care for

my wife, Nicole. If something isn't 100% covered, out of pocket is affordable after what Medicaid does pay. My most used Medicaid health services are prescriptions for vision and getting new contacts. For our kids, they mostly use it for preventative care, including wellness check-ups, vaccinations, dental cleanings, and vision screenings."

– Justin, Iredell County

"I am currently covered under the recent expanded Medicaid. I also have a nephew who is profoundly autistic and the family relies on Medicaid for help with his care. Her employer does not offer health insurance and she is covered by Medicaid expansion as of December 2023. She was accepted. Joanna has degenerative disc disease. She is scared for her nephew, his autism is severe and he's medically fragile. 10 years old."

– Joanna, Johnston County

"My entire family receives Medicaid. My 7 y.o mentally ill son, who has been using mental health services since he was 4 y.o (as he is physically violent towards himself and others). My partner who has generally good health but is the



breadwinner of our family, so if they get sick and don't have the insurance that we can afford to help make them better, would send our whole family into a disaster. And my mother, who has multiple health problems such as high blood pressure, severe diabetes, neuropathy, severe mental health problems, thyroid disease, etc., would simply die without the affordable health care that she receives."

– Arquette, Johnston County

"My husband has a severe medical condition that requires lots of treatment and potential transplant.

We are a family of 5 and the children were the only ones that had Medicaid before expansion. My husband and I couldn't be happier to finally have health coverage."

– D, Lee County

When Dashita received her HIV diagnosis at sixteen, she was not only concerned with saving her life, but also with how to pay for her HIV medication because she knew the lifesaving treatment she



needed was expensive. Dashita knew that her family would not be able to afford the medication, blood work and doctor visits, and credits Medicaid in saving her life.

"I made a choice that I want to live, says Dashita." "Without Medicaid, I don't know what I would do," Dashita says. "I don't think that I would still be around." Medicaid has helped Dashita cover the costs of her HIV treatment, and address her other disabilities – but it became ever more critical when she discovered that she was pregnant.

As a young soon to be mother, Dashita had a lot of questions about pregnancy in general and what that process would entail. Also as a person living with HIV, she was worried about potentially transmitting HIV to her son. Dashita's provider told her she needed to change her medication to prevent HIV transmission to her son. Medicaid covered the costs of her new HIV medication and Dashita gave birth to a healthy baby boy, who was born HIV-negative.

– Dashitia, Lenoir County

"I have some ongoing health issues that haven't been able to get treated due to being uninsured. Medicaid is so helpful for me."

– D, Madison County

MOST ADULTS COVERED BY MEDICAID ARE EMPLOYED

↪ 92% ↪

of adults are working, in school, disabled or serving as caregivers

SOURCE: NCDHHS

"I am a 70yr old nanny, who had to stop working when I needed a surgery few months back. My income was already so low and losing the income was scary because I worried how to pay for the medical care I needed so I can go back to work. Having Medicaid made all the difference. I am recovering now and should soon be able to go back to work."

– Lis, Mecklenburg County

"As a Registered Nurse that works in hospice and that has previously worked in cardiac care, Medicaid has been beneficial to my life and those around me personally and professionally. At the start of the Covid pandemic in 2020, I was laid off from my job at a cardiologist office. I was the Nurse that managed multiple patients' blood thinner regimens. Visits were no longer done in person so I was ultimately let go and had to collect unemployment. With losing my job, I also lost my healthcare coverage. My husband works as a small business owner so he did not have coverage and could not cover our family at the time. Medicaid was what we used for our then one and

two year-old daughters. The benefits were amazing as I was able to get them in to see their doctors as needed.

Currently, I work as a Hospital Liaison for a hospice company and help families get their loved ones home with hospice or to a hospice house every day. The hospice benefit is covered under Medicaid and Medicare primarily. Thousands of families benefit from end of life care for their loved ones every year, and without it many would be left lost without the guidance of hospice - free of out of pocket costs.

I see the families that are completely overwhelmed with the care and don't exactly know what to do to ensure their loved ones are comfortable and safe. Hospice does exactly that. To add an additional cost for grieving families for hospice care is exactly what we as Americans and good humans don't need. Please PROTECT Medicaid, as it covers the healthcare of so many and adds an extra layer of comfort to all families- big and small, rich or poor."

- Doshia, Mecklenburg County

"Receiving these benefits is a huge relief for me. Without them, I honestly feel like I'd be stuck. The support I get through Medicaid covers essential health needs and takes a massive weight off my shoulders. Knowing I can access medical care when I need it lets me focus on other parts of my life instead of constantly worrying about what I can or can't afford. It gives me the peace of mind to keep moving forward."

- M, Mecklenburg County

"It means a lot having health coverage to be able to cover medications and cover the cost of medicals that runs over \$5000. For me it is a tremendous help coverage, and the system does work."

- T, Mecklenburg County

"Having Medicaid helped me pay for the medication that is saving my life and allowing me to live a productive life. Without the medication I would not live very long. I'm grateful for the Medicaid Expansion program."

- LM, Mecklenburg County

"I was able to get into a 28-day substance abuse in-patient treatment program because I now have Medicaid. I remember trying to seek treatment in the past but was unsuccessful because I didn't have any health insurance or money."

- Todd, Mecklenburg County

"I am a Community Health Worker who advocates and supports the population of individuals who are being released from years of incarceration with chronic physical, mental and substance abuse histories.



Prior to Medicaid expansion, my patient's only qualified for family planning which provided them with condoms only. Then due to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act these individuals were able to secure health insurance but lacked the understanding of how these plans worked for their specific situations. They were often left with out-of-pocket expenses that they could not afford to pay and tax complications that put them in hot-water with the IRS.

The gift to the formerly incarcerated is The Medicaid Expansion Program! The formerly incarcerated are now able to stabilize and manage their health without the worries of ""how am I going to pay the doctor or the pharmacy for my medication"". As a Community Health Worker, I have witnessed my patient's thrive in their lives after incarceration due to being able to establish care with a physician, have visits with specialty providers, get their medications, durable medical equipment, eye glasses and attend dental appointments! My motto is this: not everyone is looking for a hand-out, they're looking for a hand-up! The Medicaid Expansion Program is that ""hand-up"" for the formerly incarcerated individuals transitioning back into society!"

- Deborah Rose, Mecklenburg County

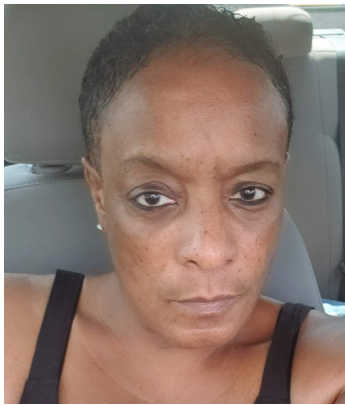
"For me, Medicaid isn't just a benefit—it's a lifeline. It's the reassurance I've longed for, knowing I can rely on it to protect my husband, my 5-year-old daughter, and my unborn baby. It brings peace of mind, a sense of relief, knowing that when we need care the most, we won't be left to struggle alone.

I feel such a weight lifted, knowing I can receive regular checkups during my pregnancy. To have the support I need, not only for myself but for my baby, is something I'll never take for granted. Medicaid has given me the hope of a healthier future, where I don't have to choose between getting the care my family deserves and worrying about how we'll make ends meet.

It's more than just coverage—it's the security to focus on what matters most: being the mother, wife, and caretaker my family needs. Without the constant fear of the unknown, I can give my full heart to the ones I love. This coverage has lifted a burden I never thought I'd be free from, and for that, I will always be forever grateful."

– Angela, Mecklenburg County

In 2013, Penny was diagnosed with breast cancer and was able to get treatment through Breast and Cervical Medicaid. However, on the last day of her radiation treatment, she lost her coverage, and her oncologist wouldn't see her because she was uninsured.



That was not the end of Penny's medical troubles, as she later suffered an aneurysm, lost her vision, and lived in fear of her breast cancer returning. Forced to deal with all of these health issues while trying to navigate our health system without insurance was scary and stressful. Penny worried about how she would afford care, and eventually owed tens of thousands of dollars in medical bills. Not having health coverage didn't just impact her, it impacted her family and loved ones as well.

Penny's life changed for the better on December 1, 2023 when she was finally able to get health coverage again through the North Carolina Medicaid Expansion program.

Having health coverage this last year has vastly improved Penny's life. She is able to get her diagnostic mammograms and other preventative screenings without going further into debt, and when she got a dangerous tooth abscess, she was able to get that taken care of and focus on healing.

Last year, North Carolina took an important step forward in making sure that every person in our state could get the healthcare they need without fear of going broke. Medicaid and Medicaid expansion save lives, protect families from medical debt, and create a healthier and more productive community. Please protect this program at all costs.

– Penny, Mecklenburg County

S, a 46 year old single man, has struggled to access disability benefits due to his limited medical records. In 2013, S left full-time employment to take care of his elderly mother until her passing. Falling within the coverage gap, and being unemployed, S lost access to affordable healthcare.

Following his mother's death in 2018, S struggled to manage his depression and chronic pain. Everything changed for S when North Carolina passed Medicaid expansion in December of 2023. S immediately scheduled appointments to establish a healthcare plan to obtain the diagnoses he had been desperately needing. As a result of Medicaid Expansion, S has been able to establish a health plan; reduce his risk of morbid obesity; complete multiple rounds of physical therapy to improve his pain; and obtain mental health services and diagnoses.

– S, Mecklenburg County

"I'm homeless and receiving support in Charlotte. Grateful to have care with Medicaid."

– W, Mecklenburg County

"I am beyond excited that I got Medicaid. I have followed the ACA since the very beginning and have

advocated for the ACA since 2013. I have a family that has survived because of the ACA. Society is better off because of this and I am able to take care of my parents because I have healthcare!"

– **P, Mecklenburg County**

"Medicaid is an essential benefit for me. It helps cover the costs of doctor visits, and if I need care after hours, I can go to the emergency room for medical attention. My prescription costs are also much



lower with Medicaid, and that's a huge help. Medicaid is truly a lifeline, and it's something I couldn't go without.

Without Medicaid, the costs would be overwhelming. Emergency room visits, pharmacy bills, even basic care like eye exams and dental treatments—everything would become a financial burden. I wouldn't be able to afford eyeglasses, prescriptions, or even necessary medications that can cost \$200 to \$300 each. With the way the economy is, and the low wages many people are paid, those costs are simply unaffordable. When you have to choose between paying for rent, utilities, or medical care, most people will choose to keep a roof over their head. This is why we have so many health crises—people are forced to choose between their health and paying their bills.

Medicaid helps make it possible to balance both, easing that financial stress and allowing people to take care of their health. Cutting Medicaid would be devastating to those of us who need it, especially since private health care is out of reach. Private insurance can cost \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month, which is completely unaffordable for most people. With minimum wage hovering around \$7.25 an hour, even a job that pays \$12 to \$15 an hour isn't enough to cover rent, utilities, and medical expenses.

Without Medicaid, we're left with impossible choices, and the health of many people would suffer.

"When you have to choose between paying for rent, utilities, or medical care, most people will choose to keep a roof over their head. This is why we have so many health crises—people are forced to choose between their health and paying their bills."

– **Meko, Mecklenburg County**

Medicaid helps take the stress off and allows us to focus on staying healthy without the financial burden. It's critical that we have access to healthcare, and that's something policymakers really need to consider. We need healthcare for everyone."

– **Meko McCarthy, Mecklenburg County**

"Medicaid plays a crucial role in covering what Medicare doesn't. It helps cover services like dental and vision care. Thanks to Medicaid, I can get essential dental treatments, including cleanings, extractions, and even dentures. My health insurance, UnitedHealthcare, handles most of the coverage, but Medicaid covers a significant portion because I'm eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare.

Without Medicaid, I wouldn't be able to see specialists, like the glaucoma specialist I see three times a year. I'm going tomorrow, and thanks to Medicaid, I won't have to pay a copay or anything out of pocket. Medicaid, as part of the dual program with Medicare, is critical to my health and well-being, especially as a senior who needs these services. Without it, I wouldn't have access to the care I need.

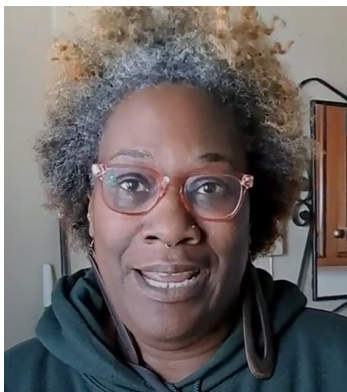
If Medicaid were cut, I would lose access to so many essential services, including the care for my glaucoma. If I don't receive proper treatment, glaucoma could lead to blindness. That's a terrifying possibility for me. There are also other services I depend on that I wouldn't be able to afford without Medicaid's support. Medicaid makes it possible for me to live my life with the care I need during my golden years."

- Frankie Clark, Mecklenburg County



"My name is Tawanna, and I need my Medicaid. Without it, I wouldn't have access to essential services like glasses or dental care, not to mention my doctor's appointments. As a nine-and-a-half-year stroke survivor, living with high blood pressure, Medicaid is critical to my health and well-being. Without it, survival would be nearly impossible for someone like me. Medicaid is not just a program for me—it's a lifeline to staying healthy."

- Tawanna Wilson, Mecklenburg County



"I have worked as a case manager in the HIV and mental health fields in North Carolina for over 25 years, and know firsthand the impact on a client's life, that having insurance, like Medicaid enables them to get the care they need - and how it improves their overall well-being."

- M. Moore County

"I am pregnant and my full-time job does not offer affordable coverage. I was able to enroll in full coverage with NC Medicaid."

- K, New Hanover County

"I am a high school history teacher with a masters degree and I cannot afford the insurance cost through my employer for myself and a dependent (my 2 year old son) so he is on Medicaid.

The extra few hundred a month it would cost me to have him on my insurance plan is not possible for us right now. We barely make it by each month. Please do not cut this funding for children."

- Nicole, New Hanover County

Ricky is a father, grandfather, a conservative Republican, a hard-working North Carolinian and was in the Medicaid coverage gap until December 1, 2023. He has an incredibly painful genetic disorder called spinal stenosis, for which his doctor prescribed pain pills. Unfortunately he was one of the millions of Americans who ended up getting addicted to those pills which led to incarceration., in large part due to the fact that he couldn't get the medical treatment he needed.



Medicaid has really saved his life. It has allowed him to get addiction and other medical treatments and allowed him to get his prescriptions. He can now get the proper health care he has been needing. He is able to have a CPAP machine which he could never afford.

He is very grateful to have health coverage through the Medicaid expansion program, as it has allowed him a second chance at life. He is now training to be a peer counselor to help other people suffering from substance use disorder.

"If Medicaid is cut then I'll lose all this healthcare I

have been receiving that has saved my life. I'm asking our elected leaders, please don't do anything that will lead to people losing Medicaid. Losing my coverage would put my health in danger which will affect my children and grandkids, Please protect Medicaid."

- Ricky, New Hanover County

Brenna is the single mother of a 6-year-old. She is very grateful for Medicaid because it provides the health coverage she and her son need to stay healthy.

Now I can get the care I need without worrying about medical debt. Medicaid should be protected at all costs. It allows me to continue to work and provide for my family."

- Brenna, Orange County

Auna is a single mom of two little boys, and is also blind. She has been on Medicaid her entire life and has been able to access the care she needs to manage her disability. After a challenging divorce upended her life, she was incredibly grateful to be able to enroll her kids in Medicaid allowing them to be connected to essential care and services, ensuring their health needs were taken care of during a difficult time and beyond.



Although she has always been eligible for Medicaid, she joined the efforts to advocate for Medicaid expansion because she wanted other North Carolina families to experience the peace of mind her and her kids have been covered by Medicaid.

Auna is also a therapist and understands the importance of Medicaid coverage for people suffering from mental health issues and substance

use disorder. Being able to access critical services gives people that are struggling a fighting chance.

"Medicaid is a life saver for families across North Carolina." Since we expanded Medicaid, over 614,000 North Carolinians have been able to access the health coverage that me and my kids have been lucky to have for years. It is devastating to think about anyone losing this coverage that has changed people's lives. The Medicaid program deserved additional investments, not cuts. Please protect this program."

- Auna, Orange County

"I am a 74 year old on a fixed income. Medicaid helps me pay for my Part B Medicare premium and it allows me to keep my whole social security check. I make so little money per month, that having an extra \$185 to pay for the many other expenses I have during the month is a lifesaver for me. Please do everything to protect Medicaid. It helps so many people in North Carolina who really need it."

- Linze, Orange County

"I am undergoing chemotherapy. I am unable to work due to the treatments. I was able to enroll in Medicaid today even though I don't have any income sources."

- L, Pitt



"My husband is a resident physician, and while he was in medical school, our family relied on Medicaid for healthcare. It was a lifesaver, allowing us to access quality care without going deeper into debt. Even after he became a doctor, we still needed CHIP for

“My husband is a resident physician, and while he was in medical school, our family relied on Medicaid for healthcare. It was a lifesaver, allowing us to access quality care without going deeper into debt.”

– Danielle, Pitt County

our children. With four kids, medical costs add up—therapy for ADHD, hospitalization for anaphylaxis, and an MRI for another. Even on a resident’s salary, Medicaid was essential for our care. I dread the day my pregnancy Medicaid expires!”

– Danielle, Pitt County

“I lost my employer coverage in July and wanted to explore the Marketplace. At first I was reluctant to consider Medicaid since my current providers don’t accept it but when I learned that there was no premium for Medicaid and that the highest co-pay is \$4, I was pleased.”

– A. Randolph County

DeAnna represents many in the sandwich generation – she spent most of her time caregiving for her daughter while also caring for her own aging parents. DeAnna still steps in to help her daughter when she needs additional assistance or backup with her own kids.

Over the past few years DeAnna increasingly found herself managing her own health problems – mobility challenges leaving her in need of a hip replacement, a hospitalization for a gluten sensitivity, thyroid issues,

and debilitating fatigue. A blood draw revealed abnormally high protein in her blood, and after months of additional testing she was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma in August 2022.

Between twice-weekly chemo treatments and the side effects of the medication, working a job that would provide health insurance is out of the question. Charity care provided through the hospital helped cover her chemotherapy but would not cover the stem cell transplant she needed. Multiple Myeloma is not curable, and without the transplant, she was only given a few years to live.

She stayed on chemotherapy while fighting an appeal for Social Security disability benefits and became an advocate to expand Medicaid in North Carolina. After a year, and just before Medicaid expansion went into effect that could have provided her the coverage she needed, DeAnna finally won her appeal. Within a few months she was able to receive her stem cell transplant.

Without Medicaid, DeAnna’s family wouldn’t have much time left with her. With Medicaid, she is able to receive her maintenance chemotherapy to keep her in remission for as long as possible.”

– DeAnna, Rowan County

“My Grandchildren’s health insurance and so many other benefits help them to flourish and stay healthy. If Medicaid is cut, my Grandchildren would lose many benefits and their medical health insurance. I pray they will not be heartless enough to cut Medicaid.”

– Ali, Stokes County

“I am not covered by my husband’s employer provided healthcare plan. We have 4 young children who are all covered by Medicaid, but I was able to find a plan that caters to my medical needs for less than \$11.”

– M. Vance County

“Medicaid has helped me so much. It has allowed me to get physical therapy and pay down thousands of dollars in medical debt.”

– Patrick, Wake County

"I have a 40-year-old daughter who has been very sick with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis since she was 10. She was a Straight A student, was active in sports, played her piano and sang in the Tampa Bay Children's Chorus. She had been certain she would become a doctor and now lives from one doctor to another. Without Medicaid she will live without medical care. Please be very careful and don't do anything to cut Medicaid funds."

– **David, Wake County**

"I'm currently the breadwinner of my family of four, running a consultancy with varying income flows. The ACA has been instrumental to ensuring that I can secure affordable healthcare coverage for two members of my family. Medicaid has been crucial healthcare coverage for me and my 6 month old daughter. I had a complicated labor and delivery and am glad we both survived the event.

Thankfully she is well but I have required extensive medical care due to the complications of my daughter's birth. The healthcare subsidies have been such a safety net for our family that has ensured that we could remain off of food stamps and other government programs that we would have needed to access otherwise. I know that I am just one of millions who would suffer irreparable consequences if this was stripped from us. I hope our leadership makes a wise decision."

– **R, Wake County**

"My brother was schizophrenic with many physical health issues as well. There is no way he or our family could have paid for all of his care. He was a huge comfort & help to our family & a friend in the community. Medicaid as is, is invaluable. Do not diminish care to those who have no choice."

– **Cynthia, Wake County**

At just nine years old, Miles is a bright, loving child with a radiant spirit. He is deeply connected to his family—his parents and his younger twin siblings. Miles, who has spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy, relies on a ventilator, and requires around-the-clock medical care.

"The healthcare subsidies have been such a safety net for our family that has ensured that we could remain off of food stamps and other government programs that we would have needed to access otherwise."

– **R, Wake County**

For Miles, Medicaid isn't just a healthcare program, it's what makes life at home possible. It ensures he can live with his family, attend school, and receive the critical care he needs to survive and thrive, all in his community.

"Miles requires quite a bit of hands-on care. He is not able to do any tasks to take care of himself, so just simple things like brushing his teeth... he requires 24-hour-a-day care," his mother, Mary Mac, explains.

Medicaid provides essential services and supplies that private insurance doesn't cover. These services allow his parents to rest at night, knowing that a nurse is monitoring his ventilator, tracking his vital signs, and administering medications. Without this support, Mary Mac and her husband would be awake 24 hours a day, an impossible burden.

But Medicaid does more than provide medical care. It allows Miles to be a child.

He loves school, where he uses a communication device to connect with his teachers and classmates. "School enriches his life so much. He has such a close relationship with his teachers and therapists, and he wouldn't be able to attend without a nurse to accompany him," Mary Mac says.

Thanks to Medicaid, Miles can also leave home safely, whether it's for doctor's appointments, a trip to the museum, or simply spending time in his community. Medicaid helped his family purchase an accessible van, a necessity for Miles to be able to leave his home.

The thought of losing these services is terrifying for families like Miles'. "Medicaid is what allows Miles to have that hands-on nursing care. It is what allows us to make our home and vehicle accessible for Miles. Those services are what make it possible for Miles to attend school," Mary Mac says.

If Medicaid funding were cut, the family would face an unthinkable decision: placing Miles in a facility. "We just cannot imagine that for Miles – the utter sadness it would cause him to be ripped away from his family... It would be absolutely devastating."

Not only would Miles lose the love and support of his home, but his health could suffer dramatically. "With the staffing ratios in facilities, his health could decline severely. These services have kept him healthy and out of the ICU. He's had just one hospital admission in the past nine years."

Miles is more than his medical needs. He is a smart, kind, and aware child who deserves to grow up in a loving home. He deserves to learn, to play, and to be with his siblings.

"Medicaid matters because it allows our son Miles to stay home and grow up with his family. Medicaid matters because it provides the hands-on nursing care that Miles needs just to live every day," Mary Mac says."

– Miles, Wake County

"I am on the Board of High Country Community Health in Watauga County. Since Medicaid expansion, so many more patients have been able to see the doctor/behavior health/dentist for their healthcare needs. Getting Medicaid patients to a federally funded health clinic is so much less expensive than waiting for them to get really sick and go to the emergency room. It makes sense from a moral and financial perspective. Please don't cut Medicaid for the people that need it the most!"

– Cynthia, Watauga County

"Getting Medicaid patients to a federally funded health clinic is so much less expensive than waiting for them to get really sick and go to the emergency room. It makes sense from a moral and financial perspective."

– Cynthia, Watauga County

"I live with my 74 year old grandmother, Beth who broke her leg in August. Had she not had Medicaid, it would have crippled her financially, on top of already being crippled physically at the age of 74. She is a staunch Republican and voted not only a red ticket in NC, but also nationally as well. Please look out for your constituents and do not defund Medicaid. Millions, like Beth, depend on it."

– Max, Watauga County

"I had no health insurance for 7 years while working part time at a non-profit and taking care of my child and mother as a single parent. I got cancer. At the time I was finding Down Home NC, which placed ads on Facebook about Medicaid Expansion. I worked with Down Home to help pressure lawmakers to vote for Medicaid Expansion. Meanwhile, I was diagnosed with cancer and had to have treatment. I was referred to Novant Health, who said not to worry about the money until a week or two of my surgery. They tried to send me to Medicaid for emergency coverage. Medicaid said they wouldn't pay as it wasn't filed in a timely manner. I think both parties, Novant and Medicaid wanted to pass the buck.

I waited it out as I didn't have \$24k lying around, and one of them paid for it. I think it was Novant as I never got another bill. After that, Medicaid was given to me. I called our local Social Services to find out why. They said it was probably because I had cancer and that racked up a certain amount of medical debt that triggered the coverage. My daughter was a beneficiary of the expansion as a college student. She would've had to pay \$2,000 for health coverage at college but could get a Medicaid waiver due to her income level."

– Dana, Watauga County

"After losing health insurance coverage in January, I was informed of this loss in the waiting room of urgent care. After months of unsure waters, I am now covered by health insurance and relieved that my

quality of life will soon improve as I'm able to access care and pharmaceuticals."

– C, Watauga County

"We have an adult daughter with autism, an intellectual disability, and brain cancer. While she's covered under our employer health plan, it doesn't cover the daily services she needs, like her day program and in-home assistance. We're deeply concerned about how losing Medicaid would impact her chemotherapy, which is vital to prevent further tumor growth or a more aggressive cancer. As a middle-class family, we can't afford her care and out-of-pocket expenses without risking everything we've worked for."

– Christi, Yadkin County

**For more information on these stories please contact
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