



Council for Health and Human Service Ministries United Church of Christ

Advocacy Toolkit: Medicaid

Background

Congress is attempting to advance proposals to change the structure and function of Medicaid by using the *Affordable Care Act* repeal and replacement process to convert the program from an entitlement to a per capita cap system.

To combat this effort we are engaging in a robust advocacy and public affairs campaign. The goal of the campaign is to create a “surround sound” effect—so that members of Congress hear clearly and frequently that they should reject proposals to convert Medicaid to block grants or otherwise cap the program.

This toolkit is designed to give you the resources to communicate easily and effectively with your elected representatives. It will help you:

- Understand the key issues for Medicaid
- Identify opportunities to influence the national agenda in your region through key stakeholders and regional decision-makers
- Engage with decision-makers to influence the actions of your members of Congress
- Hold your local, state and federal government elected officials accountable to deliver results that affect their everyday constituents

The toolkit includes social media content, templates and instructions for engaging with your local press and guidance for contacting your Senators and Representative directly. It also contains background and resources on Medicaid and sample emails that you can send to your networks—from employees to allied organizations—to ask them to engage in the campaign.

Table of Contents

Item	Page
Medicaid Primer	4
Email to Employees / Allies	6
Social Media Content	7
Tweets	
Facebook and LinkedIn posts	
Letter to the Editor of your Local Newspaper	8
Phone Calls to Congress	9
Appendix	10
Contact Information for Congress	

Medicaid Primer

Medicaid is the joint federal and state health insurance program that covers medical care and related services for low-income Americans. The program's eligibility requirements ensure that Medicaid serves specific groups including families, pregnant women, children, caretakers of children, people with disabilities and seniors.

Medicaid covers:

- Two-thirds of seniors in nursing homes
- 39 percent of American children
- 10 million people with disabilities

Who Pays for Medicaid?

Both the federal government and state governments cover the costs associated with Medicaid. The federal government pays states for a specific percentage of the program's expenditures. That percentage varies by state based on criteria such as per capita income. The average rate is 57 percent, but ranges from 50 percent in wealthier states to 75 percent in states with lower per capita incomes.

How the Program Expanded—and Didn't

The *Affordable Care Act* (ACA) gave states the option to expand Medicaid coverage for a wider range of individuals by offering to cover the full cost of the program for the new enrollees. Over time the federal government would reduce its payments for the new enrollees to the percentage it covers for the state's existing enrollees. Thirty two states and the District of Columbia opted to expand their Medicaid programs under the ACA.

Per Capita Caps

In early March, Congressional leaders introduced the *American Health Care Act*. The purpose of the Act is to repeal the ACA and replace it with a new program. But, the Act goes beyond the four corners of the ACA and attempts to radically restructure Medicaid by converting the program from a defined benefit to a system called per capita caps.

A per capita cap sets a limit on how much the federal government would pay a state per Medicaid enrollee. Unlike block grants, which provide a set amount of federal dollars regardless of enrollment, per capita caps would increase as enrollment increase. However, per capital caps do not account for variations in the costs of care per enrollee—so a beneficiary with Alzheimer’s disease would be covered at the same dollar amount as a beneficiary with hypertension. And the cap is fixed so that the growth rate is set below the projected growth of health care costs—that is how savings are achieved.

Make no mistake, although proponents of per capita caps (and similarly structured block grants) will argue that their purpose is to provide flexibility for states to customize and personalize their Medicaid programs, the goal of per capita caps is to reduce federal spending on Medicaid.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the version of the *American Health Care Act* (AHCA) that passed the House of Representatives in May of 2017 would reduce federal Medicaid spending by nearly \$840 billion. The combination of eliminating the Medicaid expansion and converting the program to per capita caps would result in 14 million Americans losing their Medicaid coverage by 2026.

Further, President Trump’s 2018 budget proposal calls for an additional \$600 billion plus cut to federal Medicaid spending over the next ten years. When you combine the cuts and caps proposed in the AHCA with the President’s budget proposal, federal Medicaid spending would be cut by \$1.4 trillion by 2027—effectively cutting the program in half in a decade.

Email to Employees / Allies

In addition to the efforts you undertake directly to reach out to your members of Congress, you can ask people in your network—from employees to organizations you are affiliated with—to join the campaign. Customize the email below to ask others to join in your efforts.

Dear [Insert] –

As you likely know, the Medicaid program is critically important to our organization. [Insert specific impact of Medicaid here – for example, 40 percent of our residents are covered by Medicaid, half of the children we serve receive Medicaid benefits, the home care services we provide for people with disabilities are paid for by Medicaid]

That's why we are deeply concerned about legislative proposals that would cut and cap federal Medicaid spending. The United States Senate is developing legislation to repeal and replace the *Affordable Care Act* which may contain provisions included in the *American Health Care Act* (passed earlier in May by the House of Representatives).

These proposals would change the structure and function of Medicaid by converting Medicaid to a per capita cap program. Doing so would mean a significant reduction in federal Medicaid spending which would lead to states making tough choices about who is eligible for Medicaid and what services are covered. Ultimately it means that we simply won't be able to offer certain services or care for as many people.

We are engaging in an effort to let Senators [insert names of your state's Senators] know that we oppose any effort to cut or cap Medicaid. We ask that you join us.

I am attaching an email and instructions for how to send a message to Senators [Insert name] and [Insert name].

Thank you for your help!

Best regards,

Social Media Content

Twitter

Medicaid covers 2 in 5 American children #SaveMedicaid #NoCutsNoCaps

3 in 5 seniors in nursing homes are covered by Medicaid #SaveMedicaid #NoCutsNoCaps

Medicaid covers 2 in 5 people with disabilities #SaveMedicaid #NoCutsNoCaps

#SaveMedicaid = largest insurer of low-income children, pregnant women, newborns, people w disabilities and those requiring long term care

Seniors, children & people with disabilities rely on Medicaid. Converting to per capita caps undermines the program

Converting Medicaid to per capita caps puts the health of seniors, children & people with disabilities at risk #SaveMedicaid

Congress should reject proposals to cut and cap Medicaid #SaveMedicaid #NoCutsNoCaps

Facebook / LinkedIn

The Senate is considering legislation that would repeal and replace the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA). The new bill may go beyond the ACA and include a proposal to change the structure and function of Medicaid.

If this becomes a reality, Medicaid would no longer be a guaranteed benefit available to seniors, children and people with disabilities that qualify, instead, it would be a fixed amount of dollars (a per capita cap) that would be used to pay for some services, for some of the people who are eligible for the program.

We oppose changing the structure and function of Medicaid because we oppose cutting benefits to the two-thirds of seniors in nursing homes, 39 percent of American children and over ten million people with disabilities who rely on the program.

We urge the Senate to reject any proposals to cut or cap Medicaid.

Letter to the Editor of your Local Newspaper

Letters to the editor are a quick and effective way to publish your views in your local newspaper. Use the template below to develop a letter you can submit. You can find guidelines and instructions for submitting a letter to the editor on your local newspaper's website or here.

Dear Editor:

An effort is underway in Washington to undermine the Medicaid program.

Together the House-passed *American Health Care Act* and President Trump's 2018 budget proposal—would cut federal Medicaid spending by half in ten years.

But the funding cut is not the most alarming part of these policy proposals. The House bill would also shift Medicaid from a guaranteed benefit available to seniors, children and people with disabilities to a fixed—and much smaller—pot of money that could be used to pay for some services for some of the people eligible for the program.

This is not reform. This is an effort to strip away a program that serves the most vulnerable [state-ians]. Medicaid covers two-thirds of seniors in nursing homes, 39 percent of American children and over ten million people with disabilities.

The fate of Medicaid—and the seniors, children and people with disabilities that rely on the program—is now in the hands of the Senate. We urge Senators [name] and [name] to reject any bill that cuts or caps the program.

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Organization]

Phone Calls to Congress

Calling your members of Congress directly is one of the most effective ways for your voice to be heard.

Follow these steps to contact the office of your Representative and Senators:

1. Call the Capitol Hill main line (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your member's office or look up your Senator's phone number in the contact sheet in the appendix of this toolkit.
2. Tell the staff member who answers the phone YOUR NAME, YOUR ORGANIZATION, and that you would like a moment of their time to discuss Medicaid cuts and caps.
3. Deliver your talking points:
 - The Medicaid program covers more than 80 million Americans that means 1 in 5 deal with complex and costly needs for their daily care.
 - Medicaid covers two-thirds of seniors in nursing homes, 39 percent of American children and over ten million people with disabilities.
 - Medicaid coverage of low-income pregnant women and children has contributed to dramatic declines in infant and child mortality.
 - Medicaid provides coverage and financial protection for millions of Americans, most of whom are in working families.
 - I oppose efforts to cut Medicaid and convert Medicaid to a per capita cap program.
 - I ask the Representative / Senator to oppose any legislation that would cut or cap Medicaid.
4. Many congressional offices will ask for your address as well as follow-up information on the issue you are presenting.
5. Thank the staff for his or her time before hanging up.

Appendix

Contact Congress

Below you will find the Twitter handles for all 100 Senators.

Alabama	Luther Strange Richard Shelby	Twitter: @senatorstrange Twitter: @sensshelby
Alaska	Dan Sullivan Lisa Murkowski	Twitter: @sendansullivan Twitter: @lisamurkowski
Arkansas	John Boozman Tom Cotton	Twitter: @johnboozman Twitter: @sentomcotton
Arizona	Jeff Flake John McCain	Twitter: @jeffflake Twitter: @senjohnmccain
California	Dianne Feinstein Kamala Harris	Twitter: @senfeinstein Twitter: @kamalaharris
Colorado	Cory Gardner Michael Bennet	Twitter: @sencorygardner Twitter: @senbennetco
Connecticut	Chris Murphy Richard Blumenthal	Twitter: @senmurphyoffice Twitter: @senblumenthal
Delaware	Chris Coons Tom Carper	Twitter: @chriscoons Twitter: @senatorcarper
Florida	Bill Nelson Marco Rubio	Twitter: @senbillnelson Twitter: @marcorubio
Georgia	David Perdue Johnny Isakson	Twitter: @sendavidperdue Twitter: @senatorisakson
Hawaii	Brian Schatz Mazi Hirono	Twitter: @senbrianschatz Twitter: @maziehirono
Idaho	Jim Risch Mike Crapo	Twitter: @senatorrisch Twitter: @mikecrapo
Illinois	Richard Durbin Tammy Duckworth	Twitter: @senatordurbin Twitter: @senduckworth
Indiana	Joe Donnelly Todd Young	Twitter: @sendonnelly Twitter: @sentoddyoung
Iowa	Charles Grassley Joni Ernst	Twitter: @chuckgrassley Twitter: @senjoniernst
Kansas	Jerry Moran Pat Roberts	Twitter: @jerrymoran Twitter: @senpatroberts

Kentucky	Mitch McConnell Rand Paul	Twitter: @mcconnellpress Twitter: @randpaul
Louisiana	Bill Cassidy John Kennedy	Twitter: @billcassidy Twitter: @senjohnkennedy
Maine	Angus King Susan Collins	Twitter: @senangusking Twitter: @senatorcollins
Maryland	Ben Cardin Chris Van Hollen	Twitter: @senatorcardin Twitter: @chrisvanhollen
Massachusetts	Edward Markey Elizabeth Warren	Twitter: @senmarkey Twitter: @senwarren
Michigan	Debbie Stabenow Gary Peters	Twitter: @stabenow Twitter: @sengarypeters
Minnesota	Al Franken Amy Klobuchar	Twitter: @alfranken Twitter: @amyklobuchar
Mississippi	Roger Wicker Thad Cochran	Twitter: @senatorwicker Twitter: @senthadcochran
Missouri	Claire McCaskill Roy Blunt	Twitter: @mccaskilloffice Twitter: @royblunt
Montana	Jon Tester Steve Daines	Twitter: @senortester Twitter: @stevedaines
Nebraska	Ben Sasse Deb Fischer	Twitter: @sensasse Twitter: @senatorfischer
Nevada	Catherine Cortez Masto Dean Heller	Twitter: @sencortezmasto Twitter: @sendeanheller
New Hampshire	Jeanne Shaheen Maggie Hassan	Twitter: @senatorshaheen Twitter: @senatorhassan
New Jersey	Corey Booker Robert Menendez	Twitter: @corybooker Twitter: @senatormenendez
New Mexico	Martin Heinrich Tom Udall	Twitter: @martinheinrich Twitter: @senatortomodall
New York	Kirsten Gillibrand Charles Schumer	Twitter: @sengillibrand Twitter: @senschumer
North Carolina	Richard Burr Thom Tillis	Twitter: @senatorburr Twitter: @senthomtillis
North Dakota	Heidi Heitkamp John Hoeven	Twitter: @senatorheitkamp Twitter: @senjohnhoeven

Ohio	Robert Portman Sherrod Brown	Twitter: @robportman Twitter: @sensherrodbrown
Oklahoma	James Lankford James Inhofe	Twitter: @senatorlankford Twitter: @inhofepress
Oregon	Jeff Merkley Ron Wyden	Twitter: @senjeffmerkley Twitter: @ronwyden
Pennsylvania	Bob Casey Pat Toomey	Twitter: @senbobcasey Twitter: @sentoomey
Rhode Island	Jack Reed Sheldon Whitehouse	Twitter: @senjackreed Twitter: @senwhitehouse
South Carolina	Lindsey Graham Tim Scott	Twitter: @grahamblog Twitter: @senatortimscott
South Dakota	John Thune Mike Rounds	Twitter: @senjohnthune Twitter: @senatorrounds
Tennessee	Bob Corker Lamar Alexander	Twitter: @senbobcorker Twitter: @senalexander
Texas	John Cornyn Ted Cruz	Twitter: @johncornyn Twitter: @sentedcruz
Utah	Mike Lee Orrin Hatch	Twitter: @senmikelee Twitter: @orrinhatch
Vermont	Bernie Sanders Patrick Leahy	Twitter: @sensanders Twitter: @senatorleahy
Virginia	Tim Kaine Mark Warner	Twitter: @timkaine Twitter: @markwarner
Washington	Maria Cantwell Patty Murray	Twitter: @senatorcantwell Twitter: @pattymurray
West Virginia	Joe Manchin Shelley Moore Capito	Twitter: @sen_joemanchin Twitter: @sencapito
Wisconsin	Ron Johnson Tammy Baldwin	Twitter: @senronjohnson Twitter: @senatorbaldwin
Wyoming	John Barrasso Mike Enzi	Twitter: @senjohnbarrasso Twitter: @senatorenzi

Thank you to Lutheran Services in America for putting together this toolkit and for allowing CHHSM members, partners, and friends to use it as part of our #OneVoiceCHHSM advocacy work.