



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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MEDICAID

STATEMENT

Wisconsin's strong Medicaid program is essential to the health and independence of people with disabilities. Adults and children with disabilities rely on Medicaid to pay for needed health and long-term care services such as acute health care; personal care that helps individuals bathe, dress, and eat; therapies; mental health services; and durable medical equipment. These services are vital to the health and well-being of individuals with disabilities and should not undergo funding cuts, changes in eligibility, or reduction of hours of services or supports provided. To address the shortage of providers, reimbursement rates must be maintained. The Medicaid budget should not be balanced in a way that harms individuals with disabilities.

BACKGROUND

Medicaid provides affordable, quality health coverage to individuals with disabilities, including people who are working or who want to work.

In Wisconsin, individuals with disabilities access the Medicaid program through EBD Medicaid, which provides traditional Medicaid services to individuals with disabilities, the elderly and the blind, or through a long-term care program such as Family Care or IRIS. EBD Medicaid provides access to SSI Managed Care, the Medicaid Purchase Plan, primary care and clinical services, inpatient and outpatient hospital services, personal care, dental care and all other Medicaid card services.

Many individuals with disabilities or other chronic conditions do not have access to employer-sponsored insurance or require additional benefits that are not covered by private insurance plans. Research shows that individuals with disabilities are more likely to report not seeking medical care due to its cost than the general population and are at a higher risk of developing secondary conditions, such as obesity, depression and pain.¹ Medicaid access, therefore, is critical to the health and well-being of people with disabilities. Moreover, both Wisconsin's EBD Medicaid and its various long-term care programs provide pathways to meaningful, integrated employment for people with disabilities who want to work.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Disability and Health." Atlanta, GA. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/index.html>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce administrative costs by significantly improving and streamlining the prior authorization (PA) process.
- Address access for children with Significant Emotional Disturbance (SED) in the children's long term services (CLTS) waiver. The SED criteria should be revisited for individuals with significant mental health issues. For example, children who qualify as SED for services provided with mental health block grant money, have been denied eligibility when screened for the CLTS waiver. The interpretation of the SED criteria also varies across the state.
- Expand Medicaid to adults between 100% and 133% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Increase the Medically Needy Maximum Monthly Income Limit for both individuals and couples. Currently, the Maximum Monthly Income limit is set at \$592.
- Ensure that the Medicaid fee-for-service schedule adequately reflects the current costs of providing care. Many health care providers no longer accept Medicaid patients due to inadequate reimbursement rates.
- Improve access to dental care. People with disabilities in Wisconsin experience difficulties in obtaining regular dental care, resulting in many preventable extractions, a high incidence of periodontal disease, and other reduced health outcomes. One major cause is the low reimbursement rates for dental procedures in Medicaid, and the resulting small number of dentists willing to accept these rates.
- Support changes to the Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) program that allows individuals with disabilities to work and save money while still maintaining Medicaid eligibility. These changes include the way unearned income is counted, and the reduction of premium costs for many participants who have faced added barriers to employment because of extremely high MAPP premium costs.
- Designate an independent entity to oversee quality control and to receive and track consumer complaints in the provision of Durable Medical Supplies through J&B Supply to allay continued reports from MA recipients about difficulty with incontinence and other supplies funded by Medicaid.

Contact Survival Coalition Co-Chairs for additional information

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