

MARCH 2015

MEDICAID

ISSUE:

Adults and children with disabilities rely on Medicaid to pay for needed health and long-term care services. Medicaid access is vital to the health and well-being of individuals with disabilities and should not undergo funding cuts, changes in eligibility, or reductions of hours of services or supports provided. To address the shortage of providers, Medicaid reimbursement rates must be maintained or increased.

BACKGROUND:

Medicaid provides affordable, quality health coverage to individuals with disabilities. Many people with disabilities do not have access to private health insurance or cannot have all of their needs met through private insurance plans—this is especially true for people who rely on non-emergency medical transportation, home care services or need comprehensive mental health and substance abuse services. Medicaid helps people with disabilities see primary care doctors, receive personal care services, go to the dentist, see therapists and obtain other needed medical services and equipment. In Wisconsin, individuals with disabilities may access the Medicaid program in many different ways. Some people may use a specialized long-term care program such as Family Care or IRIS while others use a more general program like BadgerCare. There are also programs designed to help children with significant disabilities and working adults with disabilities gain access to Medicaid.

SURVIVAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that Medicaid reimbursement rates adequately reflect 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. Support the Governor's proposal to create pilot programs to increase the MA reimbursement rate for dental care in Brown, Polk and Racine counties.
- Expand Medicaid to adults between 100% and 133% of the Federal Poverty Level. Maintain current coverage for childless adults below 100% FPL and oppose the Governor's proposal to impose premiums and time-limited coverage on this population.
- Oppose efforts to transition personal care determinations to a third-party vendor. It is estimated that this change will result in a \$19 million cut to personal care services over two years.
- Support changes to the Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) program that allows individuals with disabilities to work and save money while still maintaining Medicaid eligibility.
- Increase the Medically Needy Maximum Monthly Income Limit for both individuals and couples. Currently, the Maximum Monthly Income limit is set at \$592.
- Support efforts to implement the ABLE Act in Wisconsin, which allows people with disabilities to save money in tax-free accounts and use their savings to pay for qualified disability expenses.

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