



Why Does Medicaid Matter?

“My name is Jessica Renner I am a 43 year old female who has cerebral Palsy I use power wheelchair to get around my house and to get out in the community here in Sequim Washington where I live with my brother who is also my care giver I also have caregiver supports with other individual providers IP's I am on social security income SSI and I also work part time for The Arc of Washington State as the administrative coordinator for Self-Advocates in Leadership SAIL a coalition of 200 people across the state of Washington with intellectual and developmental disabilities IDD that focuses on legislative advocacy

Cuts to Medicaid would be devastating in my life! It would also cause a great deal of mental stress and anxiety. Not only are my doctors covered under Medicaid, but so are my prescription medications, my wheelchair repairs, my home equipment repairs such as my hoist lift, that is how I transfer. Cuts to Medicaid would mean none of the things I mentioned would not be covered! I don't make enough money to pay for all this out of pocket! Cuts to Medicaid would also put the caregiver services at risk! Without caregivers I would not be able to perform my activities of daily living dressing, transferring toileting, and meal prep. Without these services I wouldn't have much of a life! Medicaid allows me to stay in my own home, and any change to that would cause a decline in my health both physically and mentally. I do not want this and I know a lot of people in the IDD community don't want this either. Cuts to Medicaid would send a bunch of people to hospitals which would be a huge step backwards! When you talk about Medicaid cuts, they would be literally impacting folks' ability to go to bed each night in their own home and be a part of their community,”

We're already working with limited resources, and without Medicaid I really don't know what I would do! I would probably end up stuck in the hospital to get the care I need, I would lose my in-home care services meaning my current caregivers wouldn't be paid!

Healthcare is already not the best in Sequim where I live so a lot of the time, I travel out of county on Paratransit to have my needs met properly. Cuts would mean I would no longer have paratransit Services as it is paid with my provider one number with Medicaid. I'm not rich by any means and losing these services would mean I would have to go full time with my job and doing so would add more to my plate along with more stress, but this would be my only option otherwise I wouldn't be able to do anything! Medicaid is my lifeline and everything inside me don't want Medicaid cut!!

I don't utilize mental health services currently, but I have in the past with Sound Mental health services. I was always put with young students, which on one hand was good because I could share anything on my mind and the counselors would find creative ways for me to channel my stress and anxiety into doing activities whether it be coloring pages, painting flowerpots care packages, planting flowers. These activities gave me positive things to focus on. In that aspect I really enjoyed my time with Sound, but on the other hand there were such high staff turnover that as soon as I got use to someone they would leave to go to school or for another job, meaning I would have to start services with someone new.

I know being on Medicaid, sometimes you need to take what is available and that is not the best because your choices are limited. After 4- or 5-times switching staff, I moved to Sequim and discontinued services. These days I enjoy going out for coffee, going to movies, and getting my nails done. I still have the creative outlet with coloring books word searches and painting kits to manage my stress and anxiety!

Mental health services look different for every person, but if I wasn't given the proper tools to turn my focus away from the negative, I wouldn't be who I am today! One of my favorite sayings is Mental health is self-care both physically and mentally without both together I am not complete. I'm sure I'm not the only one thinking this, with Medicaid cut mental health services will be cut, with will make a huge cut in people's lives and wellbeing!!!!

Learn more about Why Medicaid Matters at informingfamilies.org/medicaid-information.
The Medicaid Matters: Share Your Story project is in collaboration with:

