



Why Does Medicaid Matter?

“ My son Joey, now 33 years old, was born full-term and healthy. Everything seemed normal during his first 12 to 18 months, but then his development stalled and even regressed. At age two, he was diagnosed with Classic Infantile Autism (now called Autism Level 3). With an IQ of 40, Joey requires assistance with most daily living tasks. He is a low-verbal communicator, relying primarily on picture communication.

Raising Joey through childhood and adolescence was extremely challenging. His inability to communicate caused frustration and anger. He had sensory processing difficulties and self-injurious behavior. His short attention span and destructive tendencies made it difficult for him to attend school for more than three hours a day, it simply wasn't beneficial for anyone to insist he stay longer.

Thanks to Medicaid and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), we were able to meet Joey's needs through personal care provider services when he wasn't in school. His medications help manage anxiety, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, seizures, and self-injurious tendencies. He has received excellent medical and dental care, as well as treatment from specialists, including a neurologist and an ear, nose, and throat doctor. Since Joey cannot communicate pain or other emotions verbally, we rely on his behavior to determine when something is wrong or when he needs medical attention.

As an adult, Joey now benefits from employment support and community inclusion programs. These services help him develop job skills, engage in activities such as exercising at the YMCA, and interact with others outside his family. They provide him with a sense of belonging, opportunities for socialization, and enjoyable activities that enrich his life.

Because of Medicaid and DDA support, Joey is able to live a happy, fulfilling life at home with his loving family. He is safe, well cared for, and actively engaged in his community. I cannot imagine what his life would be like without these resources. His healthcare, medications, and personal care support are essential to his well-being. Without them, he could have been placed in an institution or group home, at a much higher cost, and with a significantly lower quality of life.

Please take a moment to see the faces of those who rely on Medicaid. These individuals were born with challenges through no fault of their own. They deserve to be valued and given the opportunity to live happy, fulfilling lives. Their well-being matters to us all.

Legislative District Number: 16 | Congressional District Number: 5

Learn more about Why Medicaid Matters at informingfamilies.org/medicaid-information.

The Medicaid Matters: Share Your Story project is in collaboration with:

