

What is Medicaid?

Medicaid is a federal-state partnership that provides healthcare and disability services to more than 3 million people in Illinois, including 1 of 3 people with disabilities and 3 out of 8 children. The federal government currently provides Illinois with \$21 billion annually for Medicaid.

What disability services does Medicaid cover?

- **Essential health services** needed by nearly one half of all children with disabilities or other chronic medical conditions.
- **Developmental services** for infants and toddlers, such as speech and physical therapy, enabling them to enter school ready to learn.
- **School-based health and mental health services** for students with disabilities.
- **Items not provided by private insurance**, including complex wheelchairs, prosthetics, prescription drugs, and technologies that help people communicate and live in the community.
- **Nursing, personal assistance, and homemaker services** (long term services and supports) that allow people with disabilities to live in the community. Medicaid is usually the only provider of these services.

What are the potential changes to Medicaid?

- **Block grants or per capita caps.** These financing strategies reduce the amount of money Illinois gets and restrict it to a fixed amount that will not keep pace with rising healthcare costs and cannot respond to crises like natural disasters. Caps will result in significant cuts to people with disabilities, who receive the bulk of optional services that can be legally reduced or eliminated.
- **Work requirements.** Most people in Medicaid who can work are working. Exemptions rarely include family caregivers of people with disabilities. People with disabilities often lose Medicaid when there are work requirements because they are unable to complete the necessary forms.
- **Federal matching percentage (FMAP) changes.** Reducing this percentage below the current 51% would dramatically decrease the amount of federal dollars Illinois receives for people with disabilities.

What happens if Medicaid is changed?

- Illinois is already struggling to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, and currently has **16,589 people on waiting lists**.
- Illinois will have to make up the difference if federal funding is cut. These cuts will hurt people with disabilities the most, because **they are some of the only services that CAN be cut**.
- Numerous children and adults will be moved to institutions, hospitals, and nursing homes at a **higher cost**. More children will enter the foster care system.