

Medicaid: Work Requirements Don't Work.

The mission of Medicaid in Colorado is to improve health care access and outcomes for the people we serve while demonstrating sound stewardship of financial resources¹.

I am a young man (BA) with severe epilepsy and am unable to work or manage my own care. I rely on family members and caregivers for my daily meals, medications, physical therapy and so on forth. I have had multiple seizures and hospital stays over the past few years and am making strides towards improving, but probably will never be able to rejoin the workforce. Now that there is an official policy declaring that individual states have the right to impose work requirements on able-bodied Medicaid recipients, where does that leave me? Who defines "able-bodied"? And how will I continue to pay for my care if benefits are cut? This is a dilemma with which I and my family struggle with right now and is something that we never should have had to deal with at all.

Medicaid provides health and social services to the vulnerable and needy in Colorado, a moral "safety net" (welfare) program. This program is under constant attack by our state and national legislators for both its financing and regulations. Most recently a new approach to managing Medicaid services includes a work requirement to receive these health care and social services provided under Medicaid law^{2,3}. Note:

1. Eighteen states are interested in implementing this requirement:
 - ✓ States with work requirements under consideration: (7)
 - ✓ States with work requirements waiver submitted: (10)
 - ✓ States with work requirements waiver approved (Kentucky): (1)

2. Most individual and family Medicaid recipients are already working or not able to work And now Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (and Gov. John Bel Edwards as the only Democrats to support this idea) is open to adopting work requirements for some Medicaid beneficiaries⁴. We question how he or his successors will interpret "work requirements".

The goal of the Medicaid program is to provide health and social services to those who cannot supply those services for themselves. The current administration has no intention of improving services to this low-income group, but to punish them. Imagine the insecurity caused by such a regulation.

The purpose of this communication is to demonstrate the immoral, hateful, non-empathetic nature of our current national government leadership and the silence of our state government leadership. Colorado is now one of the referenced nineteen (19) states. The damage done to the most vulnerable in our Colorado community is immeasurable.

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References:

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3. Rosenbaum S. How Kentucky's 1115 Medicaid Work Demonstration Undermines the Program. To the Point: The Commonwealth Fund: Jan. 30, 2018. http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/blog/2018/jan/kentucky-medicaid-work-requirements?gclid=CjwKCAiAn5rUBRA3EiwAUCWb248FU5f4_FydbYkMXp8U8_LWWEvSNFnV93xi0ZKc9gbSLYVp0py2RoCqdkQAvD_BwE
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