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Appalachians Share their Health Care Stories with the Launch of a Medicaid Storybook

[Charleston, West Virginia] – Today, Appalachians for Medicaid released a collection of digital stories (<https://appalachiansformedicaid.org/>) from Appalachians whose lives have been positively impacted by the Medicaid program. The online storybook features stories from people with Medicaid coverage, health care providers, and enrollment assisters living in West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio that have seen improvements in their lives and in their communities because of Medicaid.

The storybook highlights how Medicaid has helped Appalachians get lifesaving health treatment and peace of mind, including cancer screenings, mental health and substance use treatment, home health care, and more.

Appalachians for Medicaid is a joint project between [Kentucky Voices for Health](#), the [Tennessee Health Care Campaign](#), [UHCAN Ohio](#), [West Virginians for Affordable Health Care](#) and [Community Catalyst](#). The collection of organizations are joining together to lift up the health care stories and lived experiences of Appalachians and highlight the positive impact Medicaid has had on enrollees, health care providers, and on state and local economies in the Appalachian region.

“If I didn’t have Medicaid I would carry that weight on my shoulders every day, making me more stressed out, more likely to get sick, and I couldn’t afford hundreds of dollars a month for health care coverage. I’m really grateful that Medicaid has helped me through this time in my life and my daughter’s life.”—Storyteller Hunter

More than 500,000 West Virginians have health care coverage through Medicaid, the nation’s health insurance program for people with low income. One-third of all West Virginians rely on Medicaid so they can get necessary health care services. The Medicaid program meets the health coverage needs of people with low income, children, pregnant people, older adults, and people with disabilities, as is highlighted in the stories shared in this storybook. Medicaid has been a critical tool for West Virginia in providing COVID-19 testing and treatment services.

Jessie Ice, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care Executive Director, stated, “The faces and voices of West Virginians enrolled in Medicaid and their health care providers highlight how important this program is for our state. Tragically, proposals in our state legislature to eliminate the state personal income tax would decimate our state budget. Proposals to replace even half of the state revenue that would be lost would require dramatic increases in sales taxes –raising overall taxes for lower-income families. And the decline in revenue would force the state to cut health programs like Medicaid. This would be a double gut-punch to hard-working lower-income West Virginians.”

To see the full storybook, visit

<https://appalachiansformedicaid.org/medicaid-program-health-coverage/>.

West Virginians for Affordable Health Care (www.wvahc.org) brings a consumer voice to public policy so that every West Virginian has quality, affordable health care and the opportunity to lead an informed, healthy and productive life. We achieve our mission by working with partner organizations to identify and advocate for positive public policy initiatives, developing and coordinating public education programs, and protecting and improving public health programs like Medicaid that serve West Virginians. We have a statewide network of consumers who help us identify issues and raise their voices for change. We work collaboratively with our state Department of Health and Human Resources to help consumers successfully navigate our health care system.

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