

# Messaging

ACS CAN conducted messaging research to gain knowledge about the value of Medicaid from people covered by the program, providers who care for eligible individuals and families, state policy makers and the public. This research confirmed that it is critically important to remind people of Medicaid's fundamental role in providing health insurance to vulnerable populations and telling stories of real people who use and have been impacted by the program. For families and individuals across this country, Medicaid means everything from regular check-ups to lifesaving cancer treatments. For doctors and health care providers, it means rural clinics and hospitals can remain open. For schools, it means kids are ready to learn and able to succeed. For local businesses and communities, it means a healthy, productive workforce and access to jobs and opportunities. Individual stories that show these impacts of Medicaid have the power to change perceptions, build understanding, and challenge stereotypes.

Below are the messages that resonated the most. We hope you will incorporate these into your communications.

**Having health insurance through Medicaid helps Americans stay healthy, go to work, care for their families and pay the bills. And that helps our communities—our hospitals, schools and economy—thrive. Medicaid covers individuals, families and communities. *Medicaid Covers US.***

*Medicaid helps America's families stay healthy and our communities thrive. It provides health insurance to low-income children and adults, seniors and people with disabilities, so that millions of people can get the health care they need to get healthy and stay healthy. It allows them to see a doctor when they are sick, get check-ups, buy medications and go to the hospital. And, Medicaid's low cost protects the family budget from medical debt—because no one should have to choose between paying for health care and paying for rent or groceries. When our families thrive, our communities and our economy are stronger. Medicaid keeps hospital doors open to provide lifesaving care for people with cancer and other diseases, secures more jobs in our communities and helps America become a healthier, more prosperous nation. Medicaid Covers US.*

## Core Messages

- ★ Medicaid is a health insurance program for low-income children and adults, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- ★ Medicaid health insurance helps millions of people manage serious illnesses, including diabetes and cancer.
  - 2.3 million Americans with a history of cancer rely on Medicaid coverage for their care.
  - With Medicaid, people can get preventive care like screenings, so they can detect cancer earlier and see better health outcomes.
- ★ Having health coverage allows people to work and take care of their families.
- ★ Medicaid health insurance makes it possible for millions of low-income children and adults to get and stay healthy.
- ★ It allows them to see a doctor when they are sick, get check-ups, buy medications, and go to the hospital.
- ★ Children with health insurance through Medicaid can get services like early screening and detection that help them manage things like asthma or vision problems, allowing them to participate and succeed in school.
- ★ Medicaid supports low-wage workers who cannot get health insurance through their workplace.
- ★ Medicaid provides temporary help for people who lose a job or become too sick to work.
- ★ Medicaid offers financial protection for working families so that they do not have to go bankrupt when they face an unexpected illness or need to go to the hospital.
- ★ Medicaid makes it possible for local hospitals, clinics, doctors, and schools to provide health services in their community.

## Messages to Defend Medicaid

- ★ Cuts to Medicaid have real consequences for our health care providers and system.
  - When people lose health insurance, they still need health care. Without Medicaid coverage, hospitals must provide even more uncompensated care.
  - Taxpayers are left to foot the bill when people do not have access to health coverage.
  - If hospitals are not reimbursed for the care they provide, they are forced to make tough decisions like laying off staff or closing their doors.
- ★ Policymakers are considering a number of new requirements that will layer on even more red tape and government bureaucracy to Medicaid—costing millions in taxpayer dollars.

- ★ Low-income children, working parents, and people with disabilities could lose their health coverage as a result of these new requirements.
- ★ Taking away people's health insurance does nothing to help them find work, lift themselves up, or help them take care of their families.
- ★ Instead of helping working families, many of these proposals will just make life harder.
  - Losing access to Medicaid can have serious consequences for people's health and health care costs. Research shows that living without health coverage means that you are more likely than those with health insurance to be diagnosed with cancer at a later stage, when it is more costly to treat, and patients are less likely to survive.
- ★ Stop the rush to make cuts to Medicaid.