

Medicaid is Essential in the Fight Against Cancer



Medicaid provides access to life-saving care for people in America fighting cancer, especially low-income individuals primarily from rural and underserved communities.

Cancer is the second-highest cause of death in America, and more than 2 million people will be diagnosed with cancer this year. Medicaid covers cancer screenings, diagnostic tests, treatments, surgeries, prescription medications and follow-up care that give cancer patients the best chance after a life-changing diagnosis.

The impact of Medicaid on cancer patients in America



1 in 10 people

One-in-ten individuals with a **history of cancer** rely on Medicaid for their health coverage. ¹



2,500 earlier cancer diagnoses
1,600 cancer deaths prevented

States that expanded Medicaid saw more than 2,500 earlier cancer diagnoses and prevented more than 1,600 deaths from cancer in the first five years of expansion. ³



7 times higher

Late-stage cancer costs are up to 7 times higher than the costs to treat earlier-stage cancer. ²



1 in 3 children

Approximately one-in-three children diagnosed with cancer were found to be enrolled in Medicaid at the time of their diagnosis. ³

Access to Medicaid...

- ✓ Increases cancer survival rates
- ✓ Increases the number of people who get cancer screenings and preventive services
- ✓ Helps more cancer patients and survivors get insurance coverage
- ✓ Leads to more early cancer diagnoses
- ✓ Helps people with cancer access timely treatment ⁴

Protecting cancer patients means protecting Medicaid

Medicaid is essential in supporting access to health insurance for individuals who would otherwise have no coverage options, ultimately improving health outcomes and reducing the burden of cancer on loved ones and health care systems.

¹ 2023 National Health Interview Survey data. Analysis performed by American Cancer Society Health Research Services, December 2024.

² Reddy, S. R., Broder, M. S., Chang, E., Paydar, C., Chung, K. C., & Kansal, A. R. (2022). Cost of cancer management by stage at diagnosis among Medicare beneficiaries. *Current Medical Research and Opinion*, 38(8), 1285–1294. [doi.org](https://doi.org/10.1002/cmo.1285)

³ Ji X, Hu X, Castellino SM, Mertens AC, Yabroff KR, Han X. Narrowing Insurance Disparities Among Children and Adolescents With Cancer Following the Affordable Care Act. *JNCI Cancer Spectr*. 2022 Jan 5;6(1):pkac006. doi: 10.1093/jncics/pkac006. PMID: 35699500; PMCID: PMC8877169.

⁴ Building on the Evidence Base: Studies on the Effects of Medicaid Expansion, February 2020 to March 2021. Published May 6, 2021. www.kff.org



What Medicaid Means to Cancer Patients

In 2005, Milly became pregnant with her son, Liam. She was uninsured at the time but qualified for Medicaid and had a healthy and uneventful pregnancy and delivery.

But at her six-week postpartum checkup, Milly asked her doctor about a lump on her breast. "I was referred to a surgeon," she said. "I got overwhelmed and I got scared. Scared that I might have cancer and scared of what it would all cost. But my surgeon said, 'Don't worry. You've got Medicaid.'"

Milly was eligible to stay on Medicaid through Oklahoma's Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, and her health insurance covered everything she needed throughout her treatment. Since her treatment almost 20 years ago, she has gone to law school, has health insurance through her job as an attorney, and is the mother to two healthy children.

"I don't like to think about what would've happened without Medicaid. It saved my life, and Liam got to grow up with his mom."

— Milly
Oklahoma City, OK