



Rapid Response Advocacy Action for AAP Members: Protect Medicaid

July Congressional Recess: Week of July 3

The week of July 10, the Senate is preparing to vote on health care legislation that would cap Medicaid funding, fundamentally changing the way the program works and jeopardizing the health of the 37 million children who depend on it.

Your advocacy worked! Because of you, the vote was delayed until after July recess, allowing us the opportunity to make our voices heard stronger than ever. Your hundreds of calls and emails, thousands of tweets, dozens of op-eds and letters to the editor in newspapers across the country and your [video testimonials](#) are making a difference.

We can't stand down. If we let up our advocacy now, senators will not feel the pressure to oppose the bill. Urging legislators to vote against this bill will happen most effectively through in-district meetings, town halls, op-eds, social media engagements and phone calls.

The upcoming congressional recess, taking place during the week of July 3, is a crucial window to urge senator to oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act and protect Medicaid.

Here's how you can help us in this critical period:

1. **Schedule an in-district meeting with your senators.** Instructions on how to do that can be found [below](#).
2. **Share your story.** [Use social media](#) to share why Medicaid matters to you and your patients. [Write a blog or op-ed](#) about your experience and call out your senators. If it runs, send it to their health staff.
3. **Call your senators.** Each call is logged and the net effect is for Senators to get the message that their constituents feel strongly about protecting Medicaid. Instructions [below](#).
4. **Report back on what you did.** [Let us know](#) what actions you took and what if any feedback you received from your senators so we can tally our total activity and make sure we're maximizing our impact in the Senate. Simply email kids1st@aap.org with your name, state and what you did/heard!

How to Schedule an In-District Meeting

During the week of July 3, senators will be in their home states meeting with constituents. Take the opportunity to attend a town hall or request to meet with your senators in person to urge them to oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act and protect Medicaid.

If you want to reach out proactively to offer yourself as a resource for any public event in support of children's health care, or to offer a tour of your clinic or institution to your federal official, now is the time to do so.

Here is the directory for [U.S. Senators](#). We encourage you to contact their district office to schedule a meeting. This contact information can be found on their websites.

The main messages for those meetings reflect the latest talking points [here](#).

If your senator opposes the bill, please thank them for their opposition and urge them to remain a "no" vote. Ask if they are hosting an event over recess to speak out against the bill and offer yourself as a resource to provide a pediatrician perspective.

If your senator supports the bill, please outline the ways in which the bill would be harmful to children and families, and urge them to vote “no.”

You can also attend a town hall in your state. You can check your legislators' websites for the latest information about potential town halls. If you plan to attend a town hall, we encourage you to make signs with messages about the need to #KeepKidsCovered or to keep Medicaid strong, voice your concerns about the Senate bill and its impact on children and families, and take pictures of yourself at the event.

How to Call Your Senators & What to Say

Find your Senators' office phone numbers [here](#). Start with their DC office and if you can't get through, try the district office closest to where you live. Leave a voicemail if you can't call during business hours. Keep trying if you can't get through – lines may be busy and that's a good sign! Here's what you can say:

- Hello. I am pediatrician from **{your state}** and a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am calling today to urge **{Senator's name}** to **oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act and protect Medicaid**.
- Medicaid covers children from low-income families and children with special health care needs. It's a lifeline program for **{insert number of children on Medicaid from your [state fact sheet](#)}** in our state.
- The U.S. Senate health care bill fails children. In particular, the fundamental changes and drastic cuts the bill would make to Medicaid would be devastating to the children and families who rely on the program. It would leave more families uninsured, or without insurance they can afford or that meets their basic needs.
- *Insert brief anecdote if you have one of a patient on Medicaid who would be impacted*
- **The bill includes misleading 'protections' for children** by proposing to exempt them from certain Medicaid cuts. A 'carve out' for some children determined to be 'disabled' does not work if Medicaid is stripped of overall funding, which will force states to chip away coverage in other ways.
- Through Medicaid, children are guaranteed benefits that cover a comprehensive array of medically necessary services, including developmental, vision and hearing screenings. Pediatricians recommend these services because they help diagnose, treat and prevent complex conditions right away, saving money and lives. Capping Medicaid funding means these services could be rolled back or eliminated altogether.
- In addition, Medicaid expansion allowed many previously uninsured parents to gain coverage, making them better able to care for their children. This bill would reverse that progress.
- **Please protect children's health care coverage by opposing the Better Care Reconciliation Act and keeping Medicaid strong.**
- Thank you for all you do for children.

You can also email your senators by clicking [here](#).

Share Messages on Social Media: #DontCapMyCare & #KeepKidsCovered

Every day the next week, consider sharing messages on social media to urge the Senate to keep Medicaid strong. Below are some sample messages and ways to look up your Senators on Twitter to mention them specifically.

The main hashtag AAP and our partners are using for this effort is **#DontCapMyCare**, and **#KeepKidsCovered** is another hashtag to incorporate into messages.

AAP Handles to follow: @AmerAcadPeds, @AAPPres, @DrRemleyAAP, [a list of AAP chapter handles](#)

Handles for all U.S. Senators: <https://twitter.com/cspan/lists/senators/members>

Make sure to use .@ if you are beginning your tweet with the Senator's Twitter handle, as indicated below.

SAMPLE MESSAGES:

- [.@_____](#): Medicaid gives {Your state abbreviation} kids a better chance for a healthy future. #DontCapMyCare
- [.@_____](#): I'm a pediatrician & my patients have one message: #DontCapMyCare. Keep Medicaid strong & Vote NO.
- Medicaid matters for children. @_____ protect Medicaid and vote NO. #KeepKidsCovered
- Today I am calling my Senators to say #DontCapMyCare and vote no. #KeepKidsCovered!
- I just called both my Senators to say Vote NO to #KeepKidsCovered!

POST A #DONTCAPMYCARE VIDEO ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Send a video message to your Senators by posting a video on Twitter and Facebook with your Senator's handles in the tweet. It's best to keep the video less than one minute.

Here is an example of a video post: <https://twitter.com/namd4kids/status/876329970418765824>

SAMPLE VIDEO SCRIPT:

Intro

My name is {your name} and I am pediatrician from {your state}. I am calling on {Senators' names} to **oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act and protect Medicaid.**

Mention one or two talking points:

- Medicaid covers children from low-income families and children with special health care needs. It's a lifeline program for {insert number of children on Medicaid from your [state fact sheet](#)} in our state.
- I am deeply concerned with any proposal to cut or cap federal funding for Medicaid in any way. Doing so would leave children worse off.
- *Insert brief anecdote if you have one of a patient on Medicaid who would be impacted.*

Conclusion:

Please Keep Kids Covered. Oppose the Senate health care bill and protect Medicaid.

Sample Tweets with video:

- {Senators' Twitter Handles} I am a pediatrician in {your state} who believes that we need to #KeepKidsCovered. #DontCapMyCare {video link}
- {Senators' Twitter Handles} #KeepKidsCovered and oppose any funding cuts or caps to Medicaid. #DontCapMyCare {video link}
- Every day I treat children in {your state} who are covered by Medicaid. {Senators' Twitter Handles} #KeepKidsCovered #DontCapMyCare {video link}

Write a Blog or Op-ed About Protecting Medicaid from Caps or Cuts

Using the below messages as a guide, consider writing a personal story about how capping Medicaid funding would impact your patients by writing a blog or op-ed in a local or national media outlet. Below are recent op-eds written by pediatricians as well as fact sheets and a new report on how Medicaid improves coverage for children in rural communities. Please email kids1st@aap.org with any op-ed you write for help editing and pitching the piece.

SAMPLE TEXT

As a pediatrician in **x city**, I know first-hand the importance of ensuring children have access to affordable, comprehensive health care coverage. Today, I am using my voice to urge Senators **{insert names}** not to cap or cut Medicaid funding in their healthcare bill.

As we speak, the Senate is preparing to vote on a bill that includes unprecedented cuts to Medicaid, a leading source of health care coverage for 37 million children nationwide and **{insert state number}** here in **{your state}**. This bill has been crafted in secret, with no public hearings, and no opportunity for our elected officials to hear from those of us whose lives will be directly impacted by the health care legislation they are proposing. Our children deserve far better.

Right now, the coverage rate among children in our state is **{insert state number}**. Medicaid is a significant reason for this progress, and the bill currently up for a vote in the Senate would reverse these gains and leave children and families worse off.

Any proposals that would lead to cuts to eligibility in the Medicaid program would mean less coverage for those who need it most, children with special health care needs and low-income families. In **{your state}**, **{insert state number}** of children with disabilities or other special health care needs like juvenile diabetes and congenital heart conditions are covered by Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. These children depend on Medicaid, and the Senate's proposal to cap its funding would jeopardize their access to critical services they need to thrive.

{Insert personal anecdotes or patient stories about how Medicaid works for children in your state}

Medicaid works, plain and simple. Its federal-state partnership model gives states flexibility in covering the needs of our patients, its benefits are designed with children's unique needs in mind to cover essential screenings and services, and its affordability has allowed millions of families to turn to it for coverage without compromising their ability to make ends meet.

Capping Medicaid funding is not the way forward. Capping Medicaid means our state would be responsible for any dollar amount over the fixed cap provided by the federal government to cover patients in our state. Capping Medicaid does not account for unexpected public health crises like the opioid epidemic. Capping Medicaid would force states to make devastating cuts in order to stay afloat financially – scaling back the benefits our children need, cutting people from the program, or otherwise making it no longer meet the needs of the population it's intended to serve. This is not the answer for **{your state}** and it is not the answer for our children.

Medicaid is an entitlement program, but it's also an empowerment program. Medicaid allows families to hold down jobs while caring for ill children. It allows pregnant women to access vital services to ensure she and her baby stay healthy, and it provides critical supports for people with disabilities so they can live independently.

I urge Senators **{insert names}** to protect Medicaid by opposing the Senate bill, and in so doing, protect **{your state}** children.

DATA

- [State fact sheets](#) summarizing children's coverage with state-specific data
- [Rural health report](#) from the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families highlighting the importance of Medicaid in covering children in rural communities

MEDIA COVERAGE

- Recently published pediatrician op-eds:
 - An [op-ed](#) in the Charleston Gazette-Mail by John R. Phillips, MD, FAAP: Saving Medicaid means saving WV kids' lives
 - An [op-ed](#) in the Dallas Morning News by Valerie Borum Smith, MD, FAAP: Cuts to Medicaid would badly damage care in rural Texas

- An [op-ed](#) on Madison.com by Dipesh Navsaria, MPH, MSLIS, MD, FAAP: Dipesh Navsaria: Privately insured? What happens to Medicaid affects you too
- A [letter to the editor](#) in the Florida-Union Times by AAP Florida Chapter President Madeline Joseph, MD, FAAP: We must maintain the safety net for medically vulnerable children
- An [op-ed](#) by Kimberly Mukerjee, MD, FAAP, in The Times-Picayune, Congress shouldn't deprive children of health care
- A [piece](#) by DeWayne Pursley, MD, MPH, FAAP, president of the AAP Massachusetts Chapter, and John Zupancic, MD, FAAP, chair of the AAP Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine published in STAT News
- A [piece](#) from Tony Johnson, MD, FAAP, past president of the AAP Arkansas Chapter, "Protect the kids"
- An [op-ed](#) in the Tampa Bay Times by medical student Andrew Stine-Rowe, "I am a medical student and Medicaid was a lifeline for my family"
- An [op-ed](#) in the Cleveland Plain Dealer by Jennifer Kusma, MD, "Don't take away the Medicaid lifeline that protects our children's health coverage"