



Rapid Response Advocacy Action for AAP Members: Protect Medicaid

Day of Action: June 22nd, 2017

Over the next week, the Senate is preparing to pass 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. We asked you to help us start momentum last week to keep Medicaid strong.

Last week during our first day of action on June 15th, hundreds of AAP members called or emailed their U.S. senators, more than two dozen pediatricians wrote and pitched op-eds to share their perspectives in newspapers in small towns and big cities. And on social media, thousands of tweets using #DontCapMyCare generated a flurry of action, with three senators chiming into the conversation themselves.

On June 22nd, we're going to do it all over again. If you called your senators last week, please call again. If you tweeted, please add your voice once more and encourage others to do the same. There is power in numbers: Leading child health and medical organizations as well as residency programs across the country will be joining and amplifying our efforts.

This is it. With the Fourth of July recess quickly approaching, the Senate will be working against the clock to vote on legislation that would fundamentally change the way Medicaid works.

We need your help to urge the Senate to preserve Medicaid in any bill they consider by joining our **Day of Action on June 22nd**. Here's how:

1. **Call, call, call.** Right now is a critical window to influence the Senate health care proposal and the most effective way to do so at this point in the process is with phone calls. 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](#).
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.
3. **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 Call Your Senators & What to Say

On this **Day of Action, June 22nd**, pick up the phone and call your two U.S. senators to urge them to protect Medicaid from cuts or caps in any bill they consider. Here's how:

- **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. If you have time, ask for a local meeting in the state. If you don't have time to meet, say the following when you call:
 - 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 any funding cuts or caps to Medicaid** in your health care bill.
 - 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 shift costs to states, likely leading to enrollment and benefit cuts, and leaving children worse off.
- *Insert brief anecdote if you have one of a patient on Medicaid who would be impacted*
- 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. Any efforts to cap Medicaid funding or phase out Medicaid expansion would be devastating to children and their families.
- **Please protect children’s health care coverage and oppose any funding cuts or caps to Medicaid** in any health care bill you consider.
- 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, but **especially on June 22nd**, 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 & #KeepKidsCovered!
- Medicaid matters for children. [.@](#) _____ #DontCapMyCare. Protect Medicaid in your health care bill.

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 any funding cuts or caps to Medicaid** in the Senate health care bill.

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 and oppose any funding cuts or caps to Medicaid in any health care bill you consider.

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. Aim to publish the piece by **June 30th**. 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 [open letter](#) to Senators Shelby and Strange in the Anniston Star by Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP
 - A [letter to the editor](#) published in the Herald-Whig by Deanna Behrens, MD, FAAP, American Health Care Act would harm Illinois kids
 - An [op-ed](#) by Kimberly Mukerjee, MD, FAAP, in The Times-Picayune, Congress shouldn't deprive children of health care