



Home and Community-Based Services Are in Crisis

Support the HCBS Relief Act!

Medicaid Provides Long-Term Supports and Services (LTSS) to People With Disabilities

LTSS provide people with disabilities assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs). ADLs include activities such as feeding, dressing, bathing, and walking. IADLs include tasks such as managing finances, shopping, meal preparation, and housecleaning. The Medicaid program is the major—and often only—source of funding for LTSS that many people with disabilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), rely on to live in the community.

People Want to Receive LTSS at Home, NOT in Institutions

The term LTSS includes both institutional-based services, such as in nursing homes, and home and community-based services (HCBS). HCBS include assistance with living independently, getting around the community, employment support, and other activities of daily living. Unfortunately, HCBS are optional under the Medicaid program, while nursing home care is mandatory. Today, over 650,000 people are on waitlists for HCBS. This means some individuals are unnecessarily institutionalized and many rely on unpaid family support. Many family members providing care often leave the workforce, causing enormous economic distress to these families.

Chronic Underfunding and the COVID-19 Pandemic Turned an HCBS Workforce Crisis Into a Catastrophe

Low reimbursement rates in many states are endemic across most Medicaid services, including HCBS. Insufficient reimbursement rates have led to low wages for those who provide HCBS, known as direct care workers. Low wages mean that HCBS providers cannot attract enough direct care workers and related support staff. Forty-three percent of this workforce lives in low-income households. Over 40% of direct care workers rely on public health coverage, primarily Medicaid, while 16% have no health insurance. The fact that many essential workers for people with disabilities struggle with poverty is completely unacceptable.

Pandemic Funding for Medicaid Is Going Away, but the Issues Still Remain

In March 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act provided states with a temporary 6.2% increase to their Medicaid match rate so long as states provided “continuous coverage” in their Medicaid programs. That boost will completely expire for all states at the end of the year. Additionally, the American Rescue Plan provided funds for HCBS. States have been allocated those funds and have until March 2025 to spend them.

Solution: Support the HCBS Relief Act (S.3118/H.R. 6296)!

Through the HCBS Relief Act of 2023, states would receive a 10-point increase in the federal match (FMAP) for Medicaid for two years to support HCBS that could be used to increase direct care worker pay, provide benefits such as paid family leave or sick leave, and pay for transportation expenses, support family caregivers, pay for recruitment and training of additional direct care workers, and more.

Act today to address this crisis and help people with disabilities and their families today by co-sponsoring this critical legislation!