

Why You Should Care About Looming Medicaid Cuts

Peter V. Berns, Chief Executive Officer of the Arc US

Headlines across the country mention looming changes to the Medicaid Program. Make no mistake when reading these articles, what they mean by change is severe cuts. The threats facing Medicaid in Washington, DC point to a fundamental problem facing our nation: a civil rights crisis that affects us all. Cuts to Medicaid would take away medical care from millions of Americans, putting their health and even their lives at risk. For many people with disabilities, Medicaid cuts would also imperil access to essential services that support individuals to exercise their basic human right to live and participate in the community.

Chances are, you probably know someone who benefits from Medicaid:

- Your child's classmate with cerebral palsy might rely on Medicaid for crutches, physical therapy, and transportation to get to and from medical appointments and after-school programs.
- Your elderly neighbor's primary form of health care might be Medicaid, helping her to stay in her own home and volunteer in your community.
- The woman with an intellectual disability working as a part-time bagger at your local grocery store might use a Medicaid personal care attendant to help her eat, bathe, dress, and get to work.

Can you imagine if your child's classmate, your elderly neighbor, or the worker at your local grocery couldn't get medical care, or was forced into a nursing home or institution because they couldn't get the services and supports they need?

If you care about civil rights, I want you to understand how proposed cuts to Medicaid threaten the values we hold dear as a nation – and why we must work together to protect health care and access to community living for people with disabilities.

Let's start with three important facts about Medicaid:

- **Medicaid provides health care for 1 in 5 Americans, including people with disabilities, working families, children, and seniors.** For people with disabilities, Medicaid is the primary health insurance program; it currently covers over 10 million non-elderly people with disabilities. Medicaid is particularly important for people with disabilities because they often lack access to employer-based or other private coverage, typically have greater medical needs, and may need essential medical supplies like a wheelchair.
- **Medicaid helps make life in the community possible.** For many people with disabilities, Medicaid is the only source of services that help them to live and work in the community with friends and families. Medicaid helps both children and adults with a significant disability to remain at home and avoid being placed in costly and harmful segregated nursing homes or institutions. Medicaid also provides long term supports and services such as personal care aides who help people in their own homes with basic human needs such as bathing, dressing, eating, and managing medications. It can even provide supports in the workplace for individuals with disabilities who are employed.
- **Medicaid is federal-state partnership. States can tailor services to meet their residents' needs, while also guaranteeing core services and rights.** The federal government pays for nearly 60 percent of Medicaid costs, on average, with a match rate that varies from state to state. Under the current structure, the federal government has a commitment to help states cover costs, and in turn states must provide specific benefits to certain groups of people, including people with disabilities. Nationwide, state and federal Medicaid together provide more than 75% of the funding for services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

What could change? An inside the beltway term you may have heard, but not fully understood, is "per capita caps". It doesn't sound so bad, until you get into the details of what that really means: drastic cuts in Medicaid services and access. How does it work? While Congress has yet to make decisions about how the per capita cap is designed, the premise is that the federal government would provide a fixed amount of money to each state based on the number of people enrolled.



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www.thearcnw.org

Upcoming Board Meetings
March 14, 2017
April 11, 2017

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United Way
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From the Director

Decisions that affect our lives are something we all should have a say about. Especially the decision about who we trust to help us when we aren't able to communicate our desires. It doesn't matter if we become disabled or we're born disabled, we still need to have a say about things that affect us. The Arc NW's Guardianship Alternatives Information Network (GAIN) provides information that can prepare you for these situations.

In Michigan, if you have a disability, your right to make your own decisions is at risk. More than other states the Michigan Probate Courts assign someone else to make decisions for 73% of our citizens with developmental disabilities, and 50% of guardians assigned are complete strangers (National Core Indicators 2015). The reason for this high percentage is likely due to uninformed medical and educational professionals who often misdirect families to the probate court for guardianship while denying treatment or special education service planning until they do so.

If a patient is in a coma or for some other reason cannot communicate his/her desires for medical treatment, doctors have the responsibility to communicate treatment options with the patient's next of kin. This age old practice differs greatly for patients who have developmental disabilities. It's most often unnecessary to take a person's rights away through guardianship assignment for these and other reasons. GAIN provides information about alternatives that maintain a person's rights and respect.

Most people are able to make their likes and dislikes well known. If your family member with a developmental disability is non-verbal, take note as to how they indicate the things and people they like and don't like. Talk with them to help them understand that they need to build trust through consistent choices indicated through their method of communication, be it voice, sounds, gestures, behavior, sign language, or other methods. It's best to start this process with young children but it's never too late to begin and often revisit this important conversation. Respect for one's ability brings out the best in all of us.

Guardianship Alternatives Information Network, GAIN, provides information about the respectful alternatives to having guardianship.

For more information go to: thearcnw.org click **Programs** click **GAIN**

Chris

Meet The Arc NW Staff

"Committed to building inclusive communities"



Christine Lerchen—Executive Director

Chris's passion to build inclusive communities began with the birth of her daughter. Chris directs The Arc NW services with a focus on building a future that will provide all people a life with the same opportunities and respect as those without disabilities.



Shonda Jones—Office Manager

Shonda manages The Arc NW's office and Fiscal Intermediary services. Shonda helps individuals control and maintain needed financial supports including Social Security and Medicaid benefits.



Michelle Driscoll—Advocacy & Community Resource Director

Michelle helps individuals and their families with special education, community mental health, employment, housing, Social Security, Medicaid, Person Centered Planning, Self-Determination, future planning, and legal decision making. Michelle's passion for inclusive communities, experience, information and advocacy skills has resulted in many successful inclusive outcomes for individuals.



Chesley Giertz—Advocate and Fiscal Intermediary Program Assistant

Chesley helps individuals and their families navigate the special education and community mental health systems. Chesley's passion for inclusive communities, experience, information and advocacy skills has resulted in many successful inclusive outcomes for individuals. Chesley also assists with The Arc NW's Fiscal Intermediary services.



Sandra Dobson—Fiscal Intermediary Program Assistant

Sandy helps individuals acquire and maintain eligibility for food stamps and Medicaid. Sandy also provides payroll services for directly hired support staff. She helps people control their individual budgets and monthly expenses that supports self-determined outcomes for individuals.



Lana Richardson—Lekotek Play Leader

Lana helps children with disabilities realize their play abilities through monthly play sessions and toy loans. Lana is the Program Services Assistant for the Just Fun Club, Athletic Program, and Arc NW Membership database. Lana's passion for inclusive play has resulted in many successful inclusive play opportunities for boys and girls.



Mary Scala—Fiscal Intermediary Program Assistant

Mary helps maintain and submit required Medicaid documentation managed by The Arc NW Fiscal Intermediary services that supports self-determination through control of individual budgets.



Holly Balaka—Lekotek Librarian

Holly sanitizes and organizes over 2,000 toys in the Lekotek toy library. She maintains the toy storage areas and play rooms so everyone can enjoy a clean and safe play environment. Holly also maintains The Arc NW offices.

Unlike the current funding system, the amount provided under a per capita cap will not automatically increase when the cost of providing covered services to eligible individuals goes up. The intent of the per capita cap is to reduce federal spending by restructuring the program and significantly cutting the cost to the federal government. Using this technique, the federal government limits spending, regardless of the needs of the people receiving Medicaid services. While Congress might include a small growth adjustment for increases in enrollment, it is unlikely that it would be sufficient to make up for the overall cuts to the program.

The result, simply put, would be less money available to the states to fund services that are essential to the lives of so many people. The needs of people who rely on Medicaid are not decreasing, which is why fixed funding like this does not make sense. Inevitably, it will result in a decrease in services for those who rely on Medicaid and an additional burden to already cash-strapped states.

If states receive reduced federal support to run Medicaid, they will be forced to raise state taxes or – and more likely, in most states – to reduce eligibility, limit services and supports, cut reimbursements to providers, or take other drastic steps. This is all in a decade when states have already slashed human services budgets due to the great recession which will only make waiting lists grow and allow millions to suffer.

We can't be certain exactly what states will do if faced with this scenario, but we do know that these kinds of cuts would lead to **painful real life consequences for people with disabilities and their families**, and many more. Without needed medical care, many people would see their health worsen, and some would die. Without early intervention, many infants and toddlers with disabilities would never develop to their full potential. Without community services and supports, too many adults and children with disabilities would have no alternative but to consider the unthinkable: a return to a past of segregated, harmful, and costly institutions.

The bottom line is that slashing federal funding means people will lose vital benefits and services that support their basic human right to a life in the community. That is a fact that people and, most importantly, elected officials need to understand.

Now that you know the facts, you can see that this is a civil rights fight – will you join us? We can't afford to go back to the era when people with I/DD didn't have the rights they have today – Medicaid has made life in the community possible for millions of people with disabilities. It's critical to people's lives and it must not be cut. We are better than that as a nation.

The Arc is the nation's largest and oldest human rights organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), serving more than a million individuals and their families. For more information about Medicaid - <http://www.thearc.org/document.doc?id=5609>.

To support The Arc's efforts - <https://www.thearc.org/donate>

Temple Grandin Named To Women's Hall Of Fame

by Michelle Diamant | February 14, 2017

disabilityscoop

Autism self-advocate Temple Grandin is one of 10 notables who will be inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame later this year. The Seneca Falls, NY organization, which recognizes "women who have changed the course and culture of the United States across the fields of arts, athletics, business, education, government, humanities, philanthropy and science" said this month that Grandin will be among its 2017 inductees. Grandin was selected for her work as an autism advocate and as an animal scientist who has transformed the way livestock are handled.



In addition to Grandin, this year's inductees include former New York First Lady Matilda Raffa Cuomo, "A Raisin in the Sun" author Lorraine Hansberry, and the former head of 20th Century Fox and Paramount Pictures Sherry Lansing, among others.

"We are pleased to add 10 American women to the ranks of inductees whose leadership and achievements have changed the course of American history," said Betty M. Bayer, co-president of the National Women's Hall of Fame and a professor of women's studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Madeleine Albright, Louisa May Alcott, Susan B. Anthony, Lucille Ball, Hillary Clinton, Oprah Winfrey and Julia Child are among the 266 women previously inducted into the hall.



JUST FUN CLUB NEWS

Our Valentine's Day Dance was held on Friday, February 10, at Thurston High School. There were red beaded necklaces, hats, mugs and bracelets for everyone. The dance floor was filled with the color red everywhere and J.J. & Company sang and played so many great songs everyone danced to. We had beautiful Valentine chocolate and vanilla cakes with pop and water. There was also a variety of candy on all the tables for everyone to enjoy.

Congratulations to this month's raffle winners:

Dawn Marie Mays, Ann Munn, Ann Stribrny, Jenny Beard, Kori Porter, Verlinda Senior, Brent Killingbeck, Michael Highver, Tony Samborski, and Jimmy Brooks.

Mark your calendar for our upcoming events:

St. Patrick's Day Dance, Friday, March 17, 7:00-9:30, Thurston High School

Chicken Dinner Dance, Friday, April 28, 6:30-9:30, Thurston High School * Pre-pay at the Arc by April 19.

Ice Cream Social Dance, Friday, May 12, 6:30-9:30, Canton High School * Pre-pay at the Arc by May 3.

Happy Spring,
Jackie Norris

The Arc of Northwest Wayne County
The Arc of Western Wayne County

After I'm Gone Program



Information sessions are held monthly during the school year at the

Western Wayne Skill Center

8075 Ritz Road, Westland, MI 48185

Thursday Evenings 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Please RSVP: 734-729-9100 or 313-532-7915

March 9, 2017

Supporting People In Decision Making

Attorney Roxanne Chang will discuss the various options for supporting people in making important decisions, such as Power of Attorney, Representative Payee, and Trusts.

March 23, 2017

Beyond Group Homes

Michelle Driscoll and Christy Courtney will discuss the various community living options available to people beyond group homes with support from the Mental Health System.

Donations

Ellen Stefaniak
Mr. Clifford Kitchen
Eileen Murphy
Sylvia Kloc
Dean & Craig Jensen

Memorials

In Memory of Ed Turlo
Arc Athletic Program Donation

Jerry Neyer & Sally Poux
Janet J. Szlagowski
Randy C. Stapish
Marilyn J. Filo
Jack & Janis Wingate
Patrick & Joanne Glance
Irene Gedvilas
Cindy & Ed Haslem

In Memory of Ken Marshall

Susan Saravalli & Thomas Charters

Membership Renewals

March 2017

Timothy Carolan
Theresa Zielasko
Shirley Abar
Gail & Peter Angliss
Lina Barnes
The Boland Family
Brent & Kathryn Bottaro
Bill & Kay Byrne
Kevin Cislo
Rikki Gans
Beth & Dave Harvey
Vincent & Marianne Licari
Joe Lunn
Larry Maniaci - Homes of
Opportunity, Inc.
Casey Orr
Janice & Mitchell Radon
Lori Serda
Susan Taylor

If you hear of the passing of an
Arc member please let us know.
Help us honor the memories
of our members and support one
another through difficult times.

Call The Arc NW office at
313-532-7915



The Arc

Northwest Wayne County

March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Basketball Wildcats 6 - 7pm Skill Center Pistons 7 - 8pm Skill Center	2	3	4 District Basketball Tournament Northville HS Guys & Dolls Bowling 1:30pm
5 Swim 4 - 6pm	6 Basketball Wolverines 7 - 8pm Skill Center	7 Hot Shots 6 - 7pm Lightning 7 - 8pm Skill Center	8 Wildcats 6 - 7pm Skill Center	9 AIG Supporting People in Decision Making 6:30 WW Skill Ctr	10	11 Bowling 9:30am Oak Lanes Guys & Dolls Bowling 1:30pm
12 Swim 4 - 6pm	13 Basketball Wolverines 7 - 8pm Skill Center	14 Board Meeting 6:00pm Arc Office Hot Shots 6 - 7pm Lightning 7 - 8pm Skill Center	15 Basketball Wildcats 6 - 7pm Skill Center Pistons 7 - 8pm Skill Center	16	17 JFC St. Patrick's Day Dance 7 - 9:30pm Thurston HS	18 Guys & Dolls Bowling 1:30pm
19 Swim 4 - 6pm	20	21	22 Wildcats 6 - 7pm Skill Center	23 AIG Beyond Group Homes 6:30 WW Skill Ctr	24 Women's Basketball State Tournament Grand Rapids March 24 & 25	25 Bowling 9:30am Oak Lanes Guys & Dolls Bowling 1:30pm
26 Swim 4 - 6pm	27	28	29	30 Poker Parties March 30 - April 2 Thurs/Fri from 11am-6pm, Sat/Sun from 6:30pm-2am Krazy Copz Vision Lanes 38250 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185	31	

CHECK IT OUT!
The Arc of Northwest Wayne County's
Web Site
thearcnw.org

Facebook Friend
The Arc of Northwest Wayne County

Facebook



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Each edition of this newsletter is prepared for mailing by volunteers from Zeta Tau Alpha.



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**Inside The Arc is also available online at
thearcnw.org
Call 313-532-7915 to end your printed mailed newsletter.**

Membership Application

Name _____

Email Address _____ **Daytime Phone** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Name _____ **Birth Date** _____

(Name line above for member(s) with intellectual and developmental disability)

Address (if different) _____

Telephone (if different) _____

Welcome!

Membership Dues

- New Member
- Renewing Member
- Associate Member
- \$35 Annual Family or Group Home Membership
- \$25 Individual Membership
- \$25 Associate Membership

DONATIONS \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$150 _____ Other