

Federal Impacts

Medicaid Work Reporting Requirements



Congress is rushing to target Medicaid for \$880 billion in cuts over the next 10 years to fund tax cuts for Elon Musk and other wealthy CEOs. This is wildly unpopular across the political spectrum because Americans know that any cut to Medicaid harms all of us. Strong majorities of both Trump voters (61%) and Swing voters (72%) have very positive views of Medicaid. Republicans are trying to disguise their end game behind seemingly common-sense language. But it isn't common sense to terminate health care for millions of Americans.

Work reporting requirements don't make sense

A work reporting requirement for Medicaid is the opposite of common sense. It will make it harder for people to get and stay healthy enough to work. In order to work, you must be healthy enough to show up. Punishing people fighting cancer and other serious chronic diseases, gig workers and freelancers, caregivers, and people who get laid off by terminating their health care will only make them sicker and less able to work. That's not common sense. On the other hand, providing access to health care is a proven, pro-employment solution.

Work reporting requirements are a solution in search of a problem

A whopping 92% of adults under age 65 who get their health care through Medicaid and are not enrolled in disability programs are already working, or not working due to caregiving responsibilities, illness or disability, or school attendance.ⁱ These are low-wage workers with employers like Walmart or Uber who do not provide health insurance. Work reporting requirements won't do anything to address the corporate greed that is making health care so expensive and keeping workers locked in low-wage jobs. In fact, work reporting requirements will terminate health care for many adults who are already working, due to the burdensome paperwork requirements. These reporting requirements will also terminate access to care for older adults who have been forced into early retirement but aren't yet eligible for Medicare.ⁱⁱ

Work reporting requirements target women, children, and families

An analysis of census data revealed that only 8% of the total Medicaid population could be classified as "able-bodied" and is not currently working, attending school, or caring for minor children.ⁱⁱⁱ Within this small population, four out of five are women, and one in four is over the age of 50. Most do not have a high school education and, while they worked in the past five years, they left the workforce to care for family members such as aging parents, sick or disabled spouses, or adult children with disabilities. They generally have no income and live in deep poverty. Another recent analysis shows that up to

322,000 children in California will lose their Medicaid if work requirements are implemented

because of the burdensome reporting and verification rules imposed on their parents.^{iv} In other words, a work reporting requirement is just another attack on poor women, children, and families.

Work reporting requirements cost lives

The bottom line is that work reporting requirements terminate health care for those who need it and will result in preventable deaths. A recent analysis estimates that 15,400 Americans would die each year because of work reporting requirements.^v

3,481 Californians would die each year from preventable causes after their health coverage is terminated due to work reporting requirements.

- i. Tolbert, Jennifer, Sammy Cervantes, Robin Rudowitz and Alice Burns. "Understanding the Intersection of Medicaid and Work: An Update." KFF. February 4, 2025. <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/understanding-the-intersection-of-medicaid-and-work-an-update/>
- ii. Justice in Aging. "Medicaid Work Requirements: Red Tape That Would Cut Health Coverage for Older Adults." February 2025.
- iii. Rosenbaum, Sara, Marc. A. Chen, Jane L. Tavares, Alison Barkoff. "Who's Affected by Medicaid Work Requirements? It's Not Who You Think." The Millbank Quarterly. April 30, 2025.
- iv. Mann, Cindy, Kinda Serafi, Jennifer Eder, Emily Polk and Madeleine Toups Tranchina. "No Place to Hide: Children Will Be Hurt by Medicaid Cuts." Manatt Health. May 2025.
- v. Murphy, Natasha and Andrea Ducas. "Congressional Republicans' Proposals to Slash Medicaid Could Cost Tens of Thousands of Lives." Center for American Progress. April 23, 2025.