



The Importance of Medicaid to Our Loved Ones with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Of the 69 million Americans enrolled in Medicaid, some 5 million have I/DD. For them, Medicaid is not an optional program. It is an essential one for them to participate in society and, in many cases, to be safe and healthy. VOR urges the Congress to protect their needs in considering any Medicaid changes.

Who is VOR and why do we care about Medicaid? VOR is a national nonprofit organization that advocates for high quality care and human rights of all persons with I/DD. Most of our members are the families of individuals with severe and profound I/DD, many of whom also have significant medical and behavioral problems. Medicaid and Medicaid-approved facilities and services are essential for their health, safety, and happiness.

How disabled are most VOR family members? The short answer is *extremely*. Many function at the level of an infant or toddler. Most need assistance in feeding, bathing, diapering, dressing, lifting and the administration of medications and therapies. They depend on staff to attend to seizures, regularly fit orthotic equipment to prevent deformities, address maladaptive behaviors and monitor the environment to prevent them from harming themselves or others, or to protect them from those who would do them harm. Some also require tracheotomies and ventilators to assist in breathing. In short, the people we represent need 24- hour, around-the-clock supervision for their survival.

How many Americans have severe and profound ID? About 250,000 people, less than 4% of all people with I/DD and some .36% of all people receiving Medicaid, have severe or profound ID. Any reduction in Medicaid assistance, intended or not, would threaten their lives.

What about others with I/DD? Medicaid also serves others with I/DD who, with some assistance, are able to work and be tax-paying members of society. Medicaid funding is a key ingredient in their ability to be productive citizens.

What does VOR want the Congress to do? Should the issue of Medicaid cuts, in any form, come up for a vote, we hope you will take no action that threatens the lives of persons with severe and profound I/DD and other significant disabilities or the ability of others with I/DD to make valuable contributions to American society.