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MEDICAID'S ROLE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

There are 11.2 million children in the United States with special health care needs, such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and autism. Children with special health care needs may require many services that may not be covered adequately by private insurance, such as nursing care, therapies to address developmental delays, and mental health counseling.

Medicaid currently provides federal matching funds with no pre-set limit to help states cover children with special health care needs. Medicaid financing reductions and restructuring as proposed in the American Health Care Act could limit states' ability to care for these children.

Many Children with Special Health Care Needs Have Multiple Needs and Live in Low-Income Families

46% of children with special health care needs have difficulty functioning in 4 or more areas, such as breathing, walking, or communicating.

Nearly 3 in 5 are white.

Nearly 4 in 5 are age 6 or older.

Nearly 3 in 4 children with special health care needs live in low- or middle-income families with incomes below 400% of the federal poverty level.

Medicaid Facilitates Access to Care and Lets Many Children with Special Health Care Needs Live at Home

44% of children with special health care needs have Medicaid or other public insurance.

49 states and DC have used state options to expand Medicaid eligibility to cover more children with disabilities, enabling them to receive care at home.

Medicaid provides children with a comprehensive set of physical and mental health services, prescription drugs, tracheotomies and feeding tubes, medical equipment, and occupational therapy.

Medicaid provides protection against high out-of-pocket costs for children with special health needs.

% WHO PAID $1,000+ IN ANNUAL OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES

32% Medicaid Only

16% Both Medicaid and Private Insurance

30% Private Insurance Only

6% Uninsured

Reduced Federal Medicaid Financing Could Limit Coverage and Services for These Children

Given their more intensive needs, Medicaid spending per enrollee is over 12 times higher for children who use long-term care services compared to those who don't as of 2011.

$33,700

Used Long-Term Care

$2,700

Did Not Use Long-Term Care

Among children with disabilities, Medicaid per enrollee spending varies across states.

U.S. average: $16,758

$6,000-$14,999 (17 states)

$15,000-$19,999 (15 states)

$20,000-$51,999 (19 states)

Medicaid makes treatment affordable by limiting out-of-pocket costs and providing comprehensive coverage.

Limits on Medicaid coverage and financing could set back efforts to care for children with special health care needs.


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