



Bazelon Center Statement on Proposed Cuts in Budget Reconciliation Bill

We call on members of Congress to reject the budget reconciliation bill that is scheduled for markup tomorrow. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the legislative proposals being considered would cut \$715 billion from Medicaid and other health programs and result in 13.7 million Americans losing health coverage. These draconian cuts would be devastating for people with disabilities, many of whom rely on Medicaid for the services that they need to survive and to live in their homes and communities. Millions of people with disabilities would lose their coverage from the bill's work requirements alone--not because they are failing to work or engage in other required activities but because they cannot meet onerous and confusing reporting requirements. The bill would also allow states to keep people from enrolling in Medicaid even if they are currently working, if they cannot prove that they met the work requirements at some point in the past. Such provisions seem designed not to encourage work but simply to take away health coverage. In addition, people who lose access to Medicaid due to work requirements would also be locked out of health coverage through the Marketplace, leaving them without viable health care options.

This legislation would be particularly cruel for people with significant mental health disabilities. In addition to work requirements that would lead them to lose health coverage in large numbers, many more would lose coverage due to other provisions including requirements that appear designed to take away coverage from people who have difficulty keeping up with more frequent eligibility check procedures. These measures would be disastrous for people with disabilities, and would also impose tremendous burdens on state taxpayers, who would ultimately pay for avoidable institutionalization, shelter stays, and jail stays that would inevitably result from loss of needed health coverage.

Taking basic health coverage and desperately needed services away from those who rely on them to pay for tax cuts for wealthy individuals is shameful and abhorrent. The budget reconciliation bill that is being considered should be soundly rejected.

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