

— TOP TAKEAWAYS —

Why Requiring Work & Community Engagement is Good for Medicaid and the Poor



OPPORTUNITY

Encouraging work is a path out of poverty and to better health.

- As a condition for Medicaid benefits, states can now consider a range of activities including: work, career planning, job searching, education or training, caregiving, volunteering, and substance abuse disorder treatment for able-bodied adults.
 - Most Americans (**70 percent**) support work requirements for non-disabled adults.
 - Another poll shows that **64 percent** think childless, able-bodied adults *in their state* should be required to work to receive Medicaid.
- Low-income Americans are enjoying better economic opportunities that empower them to secure basic needs such as shelter, food, and health care.
 - Jobless claims are at their **lowest levels** in 45 years and the number of long-term unemployed workers is down 345,000 people over the past year.
 - Over **1.4 million Americans** stopped receiving food stamp benefits in FY2017.
- Employment and community engagement can improve health outcomes among beneficiaries.
 - Work is beneficial for combatting **depression and improving mental health**.
 - Americans with higher incomes enjoy **longer life expectancies**.



COVERAGE

Reforming Medicaid can target the program to those who need it and improve coverage.

- Medicaid rolls are currently overburdened, leading to worse care:
 - Medicaid, the third-largest government program, insures 1 in 5 Americans (**more than 70 million people**) and is one of the fastest growing programs.
 - The Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) extended eligibility to healthy, working-age adults above the poverty level (in 33 states and Washington, DC).
 - Low reimbursement rates discourage many doctors from seeing new Medicaid patients, meaning beneficiaries face worse **health access and outcomes** than the privately insured.
- Safeguards are in place to preserve access to health care for the most vulnerable.
 - **States must exempt pregnant women, the elderly, children, and disabled people** from work and community service requirements.
 - States can consider treatment for substance abuse and caring for children or elderly relatives as “community engagement.”



COMMUNITY

States have flexibility to design Medicaid programs that meet the needs of their residents.

- For areas with high unemployment, states can consider the hardships people still experience.
- States can align requirements for Medicaid with their current requirements for other public benefits, such as welfare and food stamps.
- To ensure accountability for health outcomes, states need approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on all plans and must conduct outcomes-based evaluations.