



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Wendy Patton

wpatton@@policymattersohio.org

614.582.0048

Medicaid cuts threaten 218,000 of Ohio's essential workers

Federal policymakers must boost Medicaid, protect working people

Many Ohioans working in essential frontline industries could lose health benefits if federal policymakers don't increase funding for Medicaid or if they weaken protections for people who receive health care through the program, according to a [new analysis from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#). The new report shows that 218,000 Ohioans working in hospitals or grocery stores, or in jobs such as home health aides or bus drivers could lose health coverage.

In many states, including Ohio, the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has created a growing need for Medicaid health coverage. At the same time, a huge drop in state revenue prompted Gov. DeWine to cut Medicaid and other programs. Unless federal policymakers provide additional funds and maintain strong protections for Medicaid enrollees, state leaders may make more cuts. About 38 percent of Ohio's essential workers who are paid low wages get health coverage through Medicaid.

"The thousands of Ohioans on the frontlines are doing their part to keep us all safe and keep the economy moving – at great risk to their health," said Wendy Patton, Senior Project Director at Policy Matters Ohio. "The least our federal leaders can do is make sure frontline workers have health coverage in case they get sick."

As Congress and the Trump administration debate another COVID-19 response bill, the stakes are high for Medicaid: State governments are under pressure to make cuts with revenues dwindling. The longer federal policymakers delay, the fewer months states have in the fiscal year over which to spread the cuts. In past recessions, especially when federal aid was insufficient and strong beneficiary protections weren't in place, many states dropped coverage of certain benefits or cut payment rates for providers serving Medicaid enrollees.

"The plan released by Senate Republicans last week falls short of what Ohioans need," Patton said. "It fails to boost the federal share of Medicaid, which would better protect the essential workers who need it. Ohio's senators need to fight for better fiscal assistance for Medicaid and other important public services."

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Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.