



More than 200,000 Black and Hispanic Children in Florida Would No Longer be Eligible for Medicaid Under Proposed Federal Cuts

The U.S. Senate is on the verge of cutting Medicaid eligibility for school-aged children. The U.S. House already includes this cut in its recently passed American Health Care Act. Black and Hispanic children would be disproportionately hurt by these cuts, reversing significant gains made under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to increase their access to care.

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Both the U.S. Senate health care bill — the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) — and the American Health Care Act (AHCA) passed by the U.S. House roll back Medicaid eligibility for school-aged children from 138 percent of the federal poverty level to 100 percent (\$2,830 monthly for a family of four to \$2,050).¹ The Senate has delayed a vote on its bill until after the July 4 recess, but to date there is no indication that lawmakers are backing away from this draconian cut.

A recent report from the Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy at Brandeis University² highlights the devastating and disproportionate impact this cut would have on Black and Hispanic children. Based on the current income threshold, almost one million school-aged children in Florida are eligible for Medicaid.³ The proposed legislation would cut eligibility in Florida by almost one-third.

The 325,000 Florida children who would lose Medicaid eligibility include 88,200 Black children (the largest number in the nation) and 118,900 Hispanic children.

Florida has made great progress in increasing the number of insured children. From 2013 to 2015, its uninsured rate of children dropped from 11.1 percent to 6.9 percent, covering an additional 161,000 children. With the exception of Texas, Florida still has the highest uninsured rate in the South, with 284,000 children remaining uninsured.⁴

The Medicaid cut is a senseless step backwards, and it particularly hurts Black and Hispanic children, who already face serious health disparities. These children are more likely to die from infant mortality, or suffer from asthma, obesity or depression than white children.^{5,6}

A large body of research shows that access to Medicaid coverage in childhood leads to longer, healthier lives, a better chance to finish high school and college and higher economic security as adults.⁷

Medicaid is an essential tool for reducing health disparities. The U.S. Senate must reject this cut to Medicaid, a program that is a lifeline for children and their families and a wise investment in Florida's future.

¹ Stahl, E.M., Rolling Back Progress: Medicaid Cuts Would Deny Children of Color Access to Care, Health Policy Hub, Community Catalyst, 2017. Accessed via: <http://www.communitycatalyst.org/blog/rolling-back-progress-medicaid-cuts-would-deny-children-of-color-access-to-care>

² Hardy, E., Li, F.S., Acevedo-Garcia, D., An estimated 5 million children to lose federal Medicaid eligibility under Affordable Care Act repeal; Hispanic and Black children disproportionately affected, Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, 2017. Accessed via: <http://heller.brandeis.edu/news/items/releases/2017/icyfp-aca-analysis.html>;

³ Indicators, Data for Equity Policy Brief, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, diversitydatakids.org, 2017. Accessed via: <http://www.diversitydatakids.org/data/ranking/645/children-aged-6-19-federally-eligible-for-medicaid-under-income-threshold-of-138>

⁴ Alker, Joan, Chester, Alisa, Children's Health Coverage Rate Now at Historic High of 95 Percent, Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, Center for Children and Families, pp. 6-8, Appendices 1-4, 2016. Accessed via: www.ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Kids-ACS-update-11-02-1.pdf

⁵ African American Health Disparities Compared to Non-Hispanic Whites, Families U.S.A., 2014, Accessed via: <http://familiesusa.org/product/african-american-health-disparities-compared-to-non-hispanic-whites>;

⁶ Latino Health Disparities Compared to Non-Hispanic Whites, Families U.S.A., 2014. Accessed via: <http://familiesusa.org/product/latino-health-disparities-compared-non-hispanic-whites>

⁷ Chester, A., Alker, J., Wagnerman, K., Medicaid is a Smart Investment in Children, Georgetown University, Health Policy Institute, Center for Children and Families, 2017. Accessed via: www.ccf.georgetown.edu/2017/03/13/medicaid-is-a-smart-investment-in-children/