

Why Medicaid Cuts Would Harm Health Care for California's Children

by Alicia Kauk on May 12, 2017



This post is part one of our 12-part “Protect Medi-Cal Funding Series.” Medi-Cal provides a long-term investment in health that helps Californians succeed. This blog series highlights the importance of Medi-Cal for various populations in California.

Our children are California's future. 5.7 million children in California rely on Medi-Cal to grow up healthy and strong. Medi-Cal is an effective investment that lasts through adulthood. Children who are covered by Medi-Cal miss fewer school days due to illness or injury, are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college, and earn higher wages and pay more taxes as adults. [Medi-Cal](#) provides children up to age 21 with comprehensive preventive health screenings and treatments through Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (“EPSDT”) entitlement so that children get care early on. Children also receive access to dental, mental health, developmental and specialty services, like pediatric oncology. Recognizing the challenges faced by low-income families, Medi-Cal provides assistance in scheduling doctor visits and providing transportation services to get children to and from appointments. In California, 42% of children with disabilities or other special health care needs rely on critical services and supports through Medi-Cal.

On May 4, the House of Representatives [passed the American Health Care Act](#) (AHCA) by a 217-213 vote. The AHCA cuts Medicaid by \$880 billion by converting the program into something called a per capita cap or a block grant. In simple terms, states will get less money to run their Medicaid programs. If the AHCA passes the Senate, it will have a devastating impact on California's children.

- 58% of the total federal funds California receives are used for Medi-Cal. Any Medicaid cuts mean that California has less money to provide the same amount of care. That doesn't bode well for California's children.
- Shifting the cost burden to California means the state will likely attempt to cut back on children's health care services.
- Medicaid cuts could undermine core protections, like EPSDT services that ensure early screenings and interventions and help children meet developmental milestones.
- Medicaid cuts will cause California to try to reduce its obligations to provide health care to children by narrowing provider networks and adding more authorization hurdles for children to access services.
- Medicaid cuts means there is less state and local money for other priorities, like education.

Check out our Protect Medi-Cal Funding Series, [Issue Brief #1](#) for a “deeper dive” on how Medi-Cal serves as a critical safety net for California's children and how Medicaid cuts will jeopardize care for children and low-income families.

PROTECT MEDI-CAL FUNDING

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PART 1 OF A 12-PART SERIES



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⇒ **42% OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES** or other special health care needs rely on critical benefits through Medi-Cal. It also provides assistance in scheduling doctor visits and providing transportation services to get children to and from appointments.

⇒ **ALL KIDS INSURED** In 2016, CA extended coverage to all children under age 19 regardless of immigration status. Children who are covered by Medi-Cal miss fewer school days, are more likely to graduate from high school, and attend college!

