Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities

A Faith-based Approach to Medicaid Reform
Medicaid allows many people with developmental disabilities to remain in and contribute to their communities.
Medicaid Works for People with Developmental Disabilities

Medicaid is a joint federal-state partnership that has made it possible for thousands of people with developmental disabilities to live independent and productive lives, as contributing members of their communities. Medicaid covers these individuals when others won’t. Medicaid isn’t a choice – it’s their only chance.

Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports, including speech therapy, skilled nursing, occupational therapy, case management and supported community living arrangements, allow people to live in their communities instead of an institution. Even though community-based supports are better for most people with developmental disabilities and the communities in which they live and work, an institutional bias continues to make it easier for these individuals to receive care in a restrictive institutional setting.

With changes to encourage efficiencies and community-based supports, Medicaid can continue to empower people with developmental disabilities to reach their full potential in their communities.
Medicaid is a safety net for people with developmental disabilities.
A Vision to Preserve and Strengthen Medicaid for People with Developmental Disabilities

Although Medicaid provides critical services and supports for many people with developmental disabilities, hundreds of thousands wait for necessary services. For some people with developmental disabilities, the only available services and supports don’t fully meet their individual needs. Many others who are waiting to receive services and supports are living at home with older parents. As parents age and are less able to care for their son or daughter, services must be locally available to prevent unnecessary hardships on people with developmental disabilities and their families.

In this booklet, LSA Disability Network outlines four principles that will lead to a more efficient Medicaid system that provides appropriate supports in a community-based setting to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities. The LSA Disability Network is focusing on Medicaid reform because Medicaid functions as a critical safety net that account for approximately 80 percent of all spending on developmental disability support and services nationwide.
People with developmental disabilities deserve fair and appropriate supports and services that are adequate and equitably funded.
1. People with developmental disabilities depend on Medicaid policy that provides adequate and equitable services based on individual needs.

People with developmental disabilities suffer when eligibility is applied inconsistently or funding is available only for services that don’t meet their needs. To ensure that people with developmental disabilities are able to receive appropriate long-term services and supports that meet their needs, the following reforms must occur:

- Policy governing individual assessments must be applied in a consistent and equitable manner.
- Funding must be directly tied to need so that people with developmental disabilities can use Medicaid funding to select appropriate services, public or private.
- Stakeholders must be included in the development and implementation of state plans. States should be required to have due process and procedural protections to ensure accountability throughout the process of implementing state plans.
People with developmental disabilities have various needs that don’t always warrant costly and highly regulated services.
2. People with developmental disabilities depend on Medicaid policy that mandates flexible supports and regulations for integrated community living.

Most people with developmental disabilities thrive when they receive the support needed to allow them to contribute to their communities. To ensure that people with developmental disabilities are able to enjoy the same rights, privileges and challenges as other people, the following reforms must occur:

- The federal government must demand a critical review of all regulations to eliminate redundancy and add transparency to the Medicaid system.
- Medicaid should realize cost savings by minimizing administrative and regulatory rules and procedures and creating consistent reporting requirements among states.
- Medicaid should employ innovative technologies for regulatory compliance, billing and the development of creative supports and services.
PRINCIPLE THREE

Millions of people with developmental disabilities are not receiving any Medicaid funded supports.
3. All people with developmental disabilities must have access to Medicaid supports as needed.

Many thousands of people with developmental disabilities do not receive the supports they need. Instead, many people are on waiting lists, while the needs of many others are unaccounted for. To ensure all eligible people with developmental disabilities receive needed long-term services and supports, the following reforms must occur:

- States must be required to establish and maintain accurate, temporary waiting lists of people with developmental disabilities who are eligible for supports.
- States must be required to develop and implement an aggressive plan to permanently eliminate waiting lists for needed services and supports.
People with developmental disabilities should be enabled to live in their communities.
4. Medicaid policy must be coordinated with other vital supports and services.

Navigating our nation’s system for providing long-term services and supports can be very daunting. To ensure that people with developmental disabilities are able to live full, independent lives, the following reforms must occur:

- Medicaid must be coordinated with other government funding sources to ensure eligibility for supportive services, including housing and transportation is determined using consistent standards and that those needed supports are affordable and accessible.

- Medicaid policy must recognize the critical role played by trained direct support professionals and ensure adequate funding to support a prepared workforce.

- Medicaid policy should offer one-stop options for obtaining supports and services.
The Lutheran Services in America (LSA) Disability Network is a group of LSA members who support people with disabilities, the majority of whom have developmental disabilities. LSA-DN members provide supports and services to thousands of people across the United States. Members share expertise in developing and providing innovative, high-quality individualized supports including habilitation, work readiness and employment, residential services, respite care, in-home services and independent living supports.

For more information on LSA-DN, please visit www.lsa-dn.org
LSA Disability Network Member Organizations

Bethesda Lutheran Homes & Services
Watertown, Wisconsin

Filling Memorial Home of Mercy
Napoleon, Ohio

Graceworks Lutheran Services
Dayton, Ohio

KenCrest Centers
Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania

Lutheran Family Services of Virginia
Roanoke, Virginia

Luther Home of Mercy
Williston, Ohio

Lutheran Housing Services
Fairfax, Virginia

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
Des Plaines, Illinois

Lutheran Social Services of Indiana
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Lutheran Services in Iowa
Des Moines, Iowa

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
Detroit, Michigan

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota

Lutheran Social Services of New England
Wellesley, Massachusetts

Lutheran Social Services of Southern California
Orange, California

Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands
Frederiksted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mill Neck Family of Organizations
Mill Neck, New York

Mosaic
Omaha, Nebraska

Mount Olivet Rolling Acres
Victoria, Minnesota

For more information on the LSA Disability Network, or to become a member, please contact Heather L. Ansley, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Disability Network at 202.626.7949 or Hansley@lutheranservices.org.