

Disclaimer: It is always worth your time to help policy makers understand how Medicaid helps you live your life. Congress is thinking about making big cuts to Medicaid. A bill may come out as early as January. It could come later. There may be several bills that include Medicaid cuts. Things could change quickly.

Medicaid 2025

What People are Hearing from Congressional offices and
Next Steps You Can Take
January 31, 2025

Connecting with lawmakers on Medicaid is always worth your time

- You are an expert in your own life and on Medicaid. You know what help you need and get from Medicaid and what it would mean if you got less help.
- Most lawmakers do not know much about Medicaid. They do not know who is in Medicaid and why it is important to people with disabilities.
- They do not know that Family Care, IRIS, and CLTS are institution diversion programs that make it possible for people with disabilities to live in the community and stay out of costly facilities.
- They do not know who is in Medicaid and how many local jobs rely on Medicaid to pay their workers and provide health and long term care

The latest we are hearing from national advocates (Jan 30)

- Your calls to Congress are making a difference!
- There are some Medicaid cuts that have support right now and others where your calls are making lawmakers question how cuts will impact the areas they represent.
- Many disability constituents are connecting with lawmakers about Medicaid.
- They are learning what members of Congress think about Medicaid.
- Some members of Congress believe things about Medicaid that are not true or that does not reflect how Medicaid works in real life for people.

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers about Medicaid? Ways people who use Medicaid have responded.

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“There is a lot of fraud, waste, and abuse in Medicaid. Cutting Medicaid will stop Medicaid fraud.”

Disability constituent says...



“I don’t commit fraud and neither do any of the people I know who use Medicaid. Cutting the program doesn’t get rid of fraud. Audits and other tools can do that.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“Fraudulent funds are going to other countries. We would not need to make Medicaid cuts if we got back Medicaid money other countries are stealing.”

Disability constituent says...



Federal Medicaid money coming to Wisconsin is being used to help Wisconsin people and pay Wisconsin workers

There is no proof that other countries are stealing Medicaid money. Cutting Medicaid only hurts people here.

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“Your loved one won’t be harmed. We are just rooting out fraud and abuse.”

Disability constituent says...



“You cannot guarantee that big cuts to Medicaid will not mean less care or support for me. I can’t afford less care. Cutting money that pays for care harms people like me. It does nothing to prevent fraud.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“People like you are not the target.” or

“These cuts won’t apply to people like you.” or

“We can target able bodied people without dependents.”

Disability constituent says...



“People like me will be collateral damage. Big cuts to Medicaid effect everyone who gets paid by Medicaid or relies on Medicaid for health and long-term care. There is no way to single out certain people and have cuts only apply to them. ”

PS. Who is the target and why?

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

Sees Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security or the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) as the same.

Disability constituent says...



“Medicaid is different from X, Y, or z. Medicaid is the only place I can get the help I need to make sure I do not end up in a nursing home or institution. Medicaid serves poor people. Most people in Medicaid are kids, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and older adults.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“My positions on Medicaid are on my website.” (Website has no positions on Medicaid, only Affordable Care Act).

Disability constituent says...



“I would like to hear your positions now from you. Your website has general health care information, but I want to know what you will do to prevent cuts specifically to Medicaid.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“Don’t worry, these cuts won’t happen.”

Disability constituent says...



“I am worried. I can’t afford any cuts to Medicaid. What are you going to do to make sure there are no cuts to Medicaid?”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“We don’t intend to hurt people with I/DD.”

Disability constituent says...



“Just because you don’t intend to harm people with I/DD doesn’t mean it won’t happen. People with I/DD rely on Medicaid for many things for a long time, often a lifetime. Our people will feel Medicaid cuts the most because we use it the most.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“We’ll put protections in place so people with I/DD are not impacted.”

Disability constituent says...



“Medicaid right now promises people with I/DD will get the care they need their entire lives. There is no need the way Medicaid is funded or cut funding.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“We will exempt people with I/DD.”

Disability constituent says...



“Exemptions never include everyone who needs care, and who is exempt can change at anytime. There will be people with disabilities that need help who will be kept out of Medicaid.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“It will be up to the states to decide whether they cut Medicaid programs.”

Disability constituent says...



“Federal Medicaid cuts mean states can’t pay for their current Medicaid programs without changes. Congress is making a decision that will hurt states and impact everyone living there.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“We aren’t cutting Medicaid services.”

Disability constituent says...



“Federal cuts mean big state budget holes. You are cutting the money that funds the services, and passing the burden to decide how to cut programs to states.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“These cuts won’t occur right away.”

Disability constituent says...



“I will need care in two years. I will need care in 5 and 10 years and beyond. If my care or supports are reduced at all, it will mean X for me no matter when it happens.”

What are disability constituents hearing from lawmakers



Lawmaker says...

“There isn’t a bill so I don’t know what will be in it. We need to know what it says first.”

Disability constituent says...



“Some of these ideas were in a bill that failed by one vote in 2017. A menu of cuts has been published, and there has been media coverage of these ideas.”

Be assertive. Correct lawmakers when they say things that are incorrect or do not match your Medicaid experience.

Challenge lawmaker assumptions about who is in Medicaid and how Medicaid money is used.

Keep listening. What you hear from lawmakers may change.

Keep talking. Keep the focus on how Medicaid cuts impact you, your family, the local workforce, your community.

Lawmakers may change messages to constituents, but that is not the same as changing how they might vote on Medicaid cuts.

Ways disability constituents have been connecting with Congress. Tips on persistence, getting meetings, and talking with the right staff.

Sign up for lawmaker's newsletters and follow their social media accounts

Lawmakers' constituent newsletters

- Includes information about in-district town halls and events members will attend
- Includes information on policy topics the member chooses to highlight for constituents
 - Is Medicaid part of what they are talking about with constituents?
 - What are they saying about Medicaid?
 - Does it reflect your lived experience?
- May have polls or ask for feedback.

Social Media accounts

- Most members have official social media accounts (Facebook, X, Instagram, You Tube, etc.).
- Follow what they are saying (or not saying)
- Comment on posts related to Medicaid or requesting feedback on issues constituents think are important.
- **TIP: AI Trolls respond to comments. Don't engage. Don't take it personally.**

Call Washington DC and in-district offices

DC Office

- Has Health/Medicaid policy staff who is the office expert on their topic.
- Follows federal bills and advises member on Medicaid changes.
- Job is to listen to people's opinions on health care bills. Advises member on health policy positions.
- Often DC office develops messages/responses to constituents

In-District office

- Role is constituent services.
- Job is to track and reports to DC office about what they hear from constituents.
- Holds in-district meetings with constituents.
- Knows when members will be in-district and when they are holding listening sessions or will be at events.

What are disability constituents asking for when they call?

- Who is your lead health or Medicaid policy person? What is their contact information?
- Request specific person to email with Medicaid story and more information about Medicaid.
- Request for a phone or Zoom meeting to discuss Medicaid cut concerns.
- Request for an in-district meeting.
- Request follow up with lawmaker on their positions on Medicaid cuts.



What to do if the office does not want to give you health policy staff name or contact information

- Ask again. You want a relationship with the person who is talking to the member about Medicaid.
- Work e-mail addresses and employee names in public offices that serve constituents can be shared.
- Constituent communication is a part of the work. You are a constituent.
- If policy staff is not available, leaving a message and following up with an e-mail with what you said on the phone is important.
- Ask for the health policy staff every time you call.

Meeting request script

“Hello, my name is Jenny Jones and I live in Manitowoc, WI. I’m calling because I/my family member uses X, which is a Medicaid program. I’m very concerned about proposed cuts to Medicaid. I know Congressman X has a local office, so I would like to schedule a meeting with the health policy staffer to talk through my concerns.”


You can meet one on one or as part of a group

- It is helpful to practice what you want to say before the meeting.
- If you are part of a group of local disability constituents attending a meeting having a planning meeting is a good idea.
- Everyone can make sure the points they make compliment each other and everyone can contribute.
- If you get a meeting with a legislator and want to do a prep meeting and/or find other people to go with you:
 - Contact:
Beth.Swedeem@wisconsin.gov
 - Tamara.Jackson@wisconsin.gov

What to talk about when you get a meeting

- Your personal story about how Medicaid matters to you and your family.
- Other people you know who rely on Medicaid and would be impacted by Medicaid cuts.
- The number of people that help you who are paid by Medicaid whose jobs would be impacted if Medicaid did not provide care to everyone who needs it.
- Professional experience that shows how many different clients and people would be impacted by Medicaid cuts

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WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Medicaid Matters to Me

Hi, My name is _____ and I live in _____.

I am _____. (Ex.: Person with a disability. Family member of a person with a disability. Care provider to a person with a disability.)

Here is what my life looks like now.	Medicaid makes it possible.	With Medicaid as it is I am not always able to:	If Medicaid is cut, and I have less support than I have now:
Ex. I live in my home in the community, not an institution, I work, I volunteer etc.	Ex. I need caregiver to get me out of bed, help support me at my job, to get medications, to get to appointments and other places)	Ex. Find enough caregivers, get transportation in the evenings, get support on my job.	Ex. Live where I want, get out of bed, get to work, keep up on medications, etc.
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Ask: If there is less money for Medicaid, the daily lives and health of people like me will be impacted. Don't make cuts that will mean less Medicaid money for states. Thank you for your time.

https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Medicaid-Storytelling-Sheet-Ver-3_11525_FillablePDF.pdf

A disability constituent telling her Medicaid story

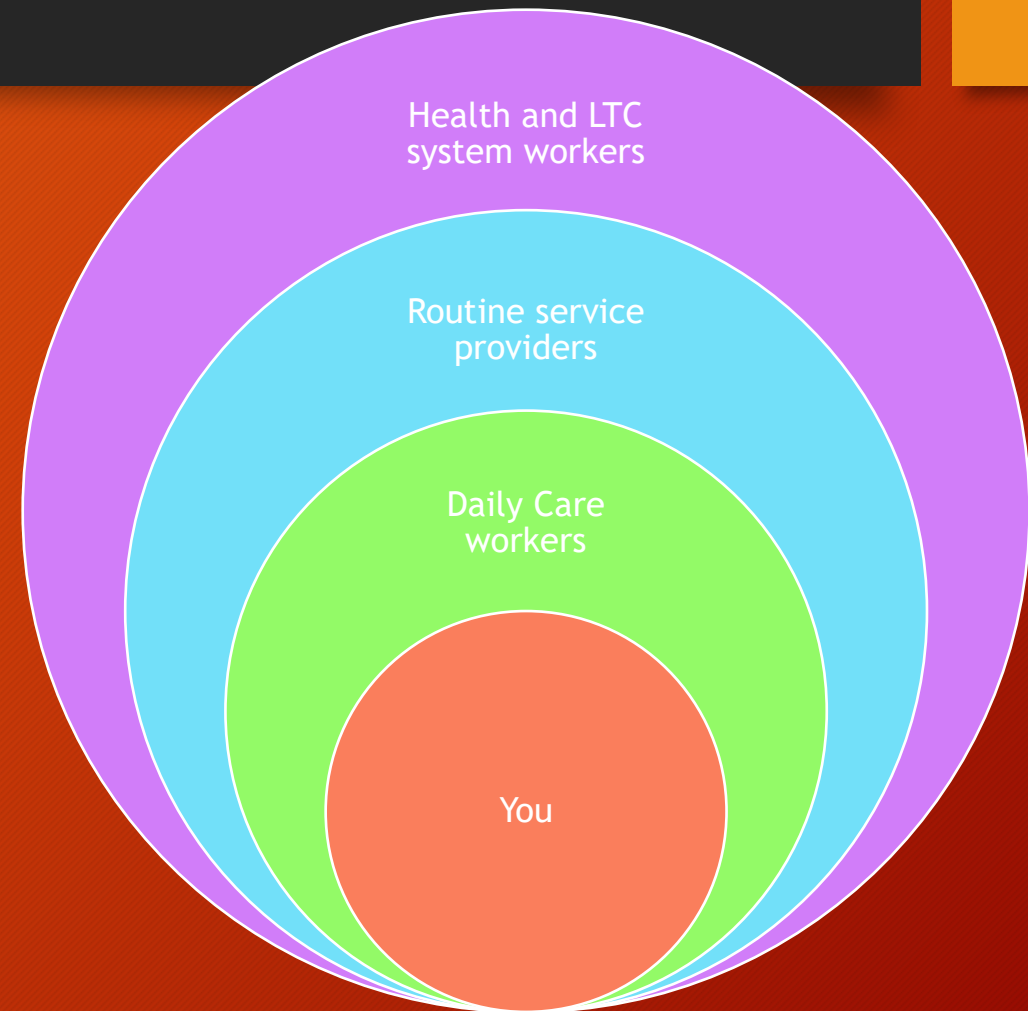
- Meet Nancy Gapinski
- <https://youtube.com/shorts/xF0GPOf1C88?feature=share>



Every person in Medicaid supports many workers who provide care

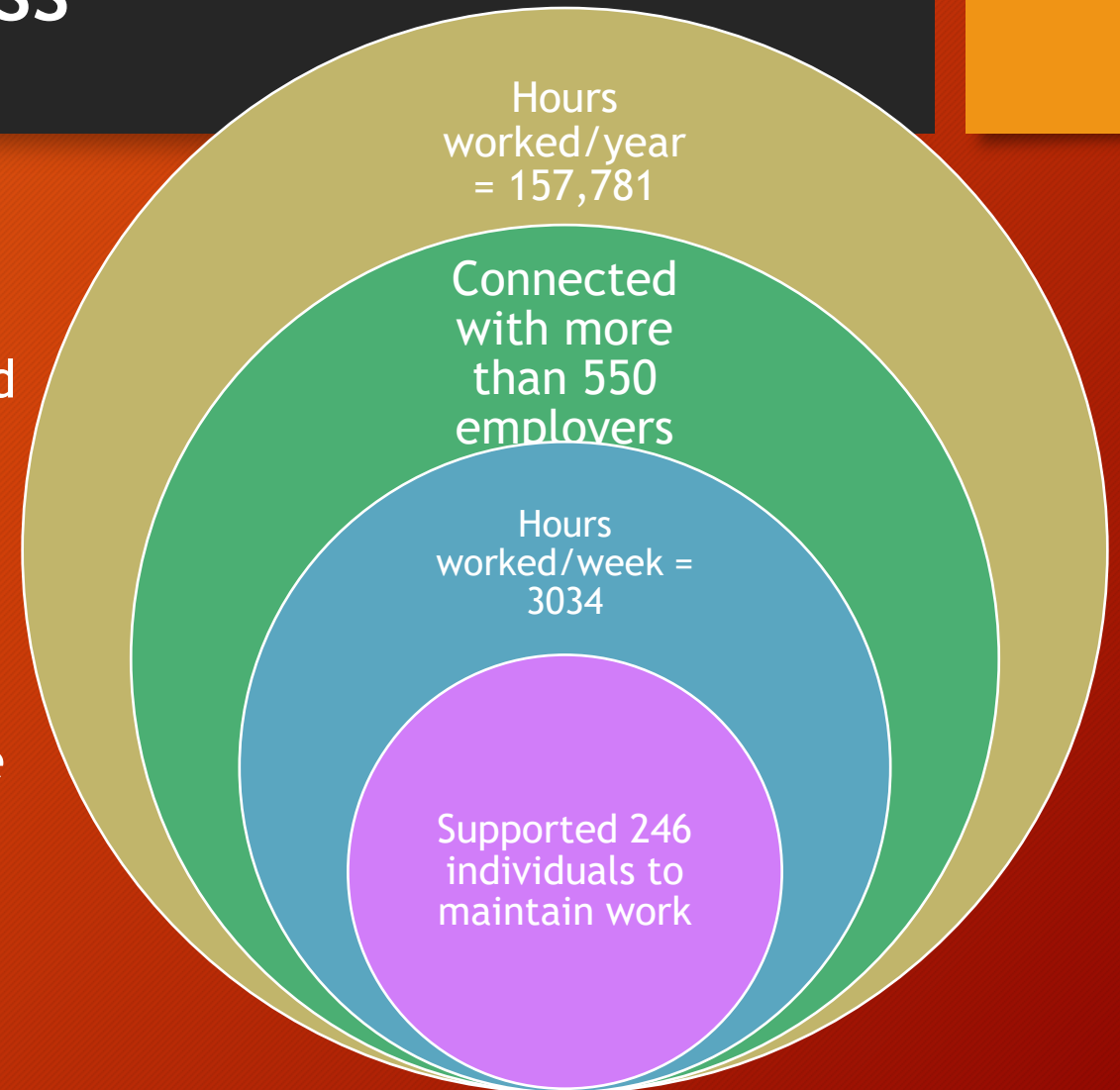
Map your care network!

- How many workers paid by Medicaid provide daily or routine help to you or your family member?
 - People like, personal care workers, DSPs, private duty nurses, job coaches, therapists, day and employment services, residential service providers, case managers,
- The needs of one person support many jobs.
- Those Medicaid-funded jobs support unpaid caregiver's ability to work.



Medicaid supports business

- Map the impact of your business
 - Medicaid money pays workers' salaries.
 - Medicaid is a payer source for small and large businesses (providers, hospitals)
 - Many businesses paid by Medicaid also provide care for clients who are not on Medicaid.
 - Serving Medicaid clients helps families.
 - Businesses paid for by Medicaid provide value to the entire community.



What people have asked for in meetings

- Member to commit to not voting for Medicaid cuts
- Asked for in-district Medicaid forum
- Asked what member is doing to publicly talk about how Medicaid cuts will impact people in their districts.
- Asked what member is hearing from Wisconsin delegation about Medicaid cuts.
- Asked member to convince other members of Wisconsin delegation not to support Medicaid cuts



Attend in-district town halls and speak about Medicaid with your member of Congress

- Be prepared to share your story in 3 minutes
- Go by yourself or get together a group of disability advocates. Attending together shows many people are concerned.
- If you have a local group, talk to each other before so everyone's story shows how many impacts there would be if Medicaid is cut
- Be sure to have an “ask”
 - Can you commit to preventing cuts to Medicaid?
 - Will you talk to others in the WI delegation about protecting Medicaid?

Medicaid resources you can use with lawmakers

programs would deepen over time:

- These ideas could change who and what is covered under Medicaid.

crisis or people into an expensive Medicaid funded institutional setting.

- These proposed cuts are so large they will impact everyone in Medicaid.
- There is no way to single out certain people and have cuts only apply to them.

Ideas to cut Federal money spent on Medicaid and health care*

#1 Medicaid Block Grants	#7 Decrease amount of Federal Medicaid dollars (FMAP) going to states	#3 Limit amount of Medicaid dollars that can be spent on one person (per capita or lifetime cap)	#4 Slow or police changes to make it easier for states to cut Medicaid or keep people out of Medicaid programs
#5 Stop states from using money from Provider Taxes and other sources as part of state Medicaid match	#6 Change what must be covered under Affordable Care Act (ACA)	#7 Stop Federal money that lowers Affordable Care Act (ACA) premiums	#8 Lower or stop Federal funding for Medicaid expansion population

*There are more ideas in reports that would impact Medicaid beyond the 8 listed above.

Medicaid in Wisconsin: A to Z

Wisconsin Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that provides high-quality health care coverage, long-term care, and other services to over one million Wisconsin residents. Below is a list of all the Medicaid programs in Wisconsin. Each program has different rules about things like age and income. To be eligible for a program, you must meet all its rules.

BadgerCare Plus Health care coverage for low-income people who are ages 0-64.	Children Come First Care coordination to help youth who are under age 19, live in Dane County, and have serious mental health needs stay in their home and/or community.
BadgerCare Plus Emergency Services Limited health care coverage for people ages 0-64 who are not eligible for BadgerCare Plus because of their immigration status but who need immediate care.	Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Waiver Program Services and supports to help children and youth under age 22 who have major long-term disabilities or complex medical needs live in their home or community.
BadgerCare Plus Former Foster Care Youth Health care coverage for people ages 18-25 who	Emergency Services Medicaid

25% of WI population is low-income (<200% FPL*)

18% of WI population is covered by Medicaid/CHIP

Uninsured Rates in WI

Year	WI	US
2013 (Pre-ACA)	10%	7%
2022	17%	10%

WI Expansion Status: Not Adopted

Adults in Coverage Gap: 0

Group	Rate
Children	306%
Pregnant Women	306%
Parents	100%
Childless Adults	100%
Seniors & People w/ Disabilities	83%

*100% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL): \$25,820 for a family of three, \$15,060 for an individual

In WI, Medicaid Covers:

- 1 in 7 adults ages 19-64
- 1 in 3 children

41% of non-elderly Medicaid enrollees in WI are people of color

White	Black	Hispanic	Other
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Who's in WI Medicaid and what 2025 cuts mean for state

https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/MedicaidInWisconsinSheet_012325.pdf

List of Wisconsin's Medicaid programs (DHS)

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02383.pdf>

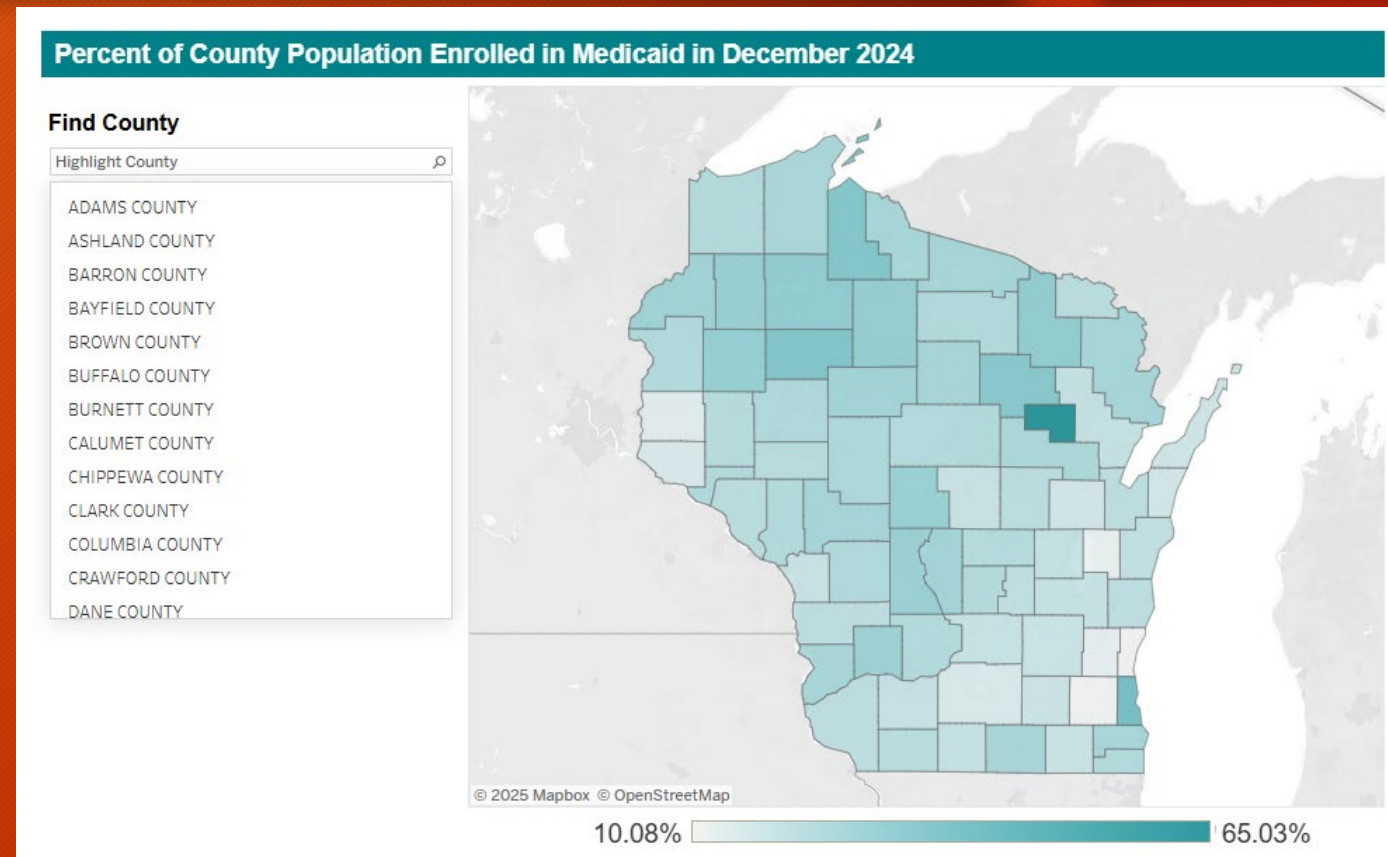
Wisconsin Medicaid Factsheet (Kaiser Health)

<https://files.kff.org/attachment/factsheet-medicaid-state-WI>

Medicaid resource you can use with lawmakers

- Look up what percentage of people (or exactly how many people) rely on Medicaid in your county:
 - Ex. 25% of Racine County's population is in Medicaid
- This doesn't count how many workers are paid by Medicaid to provide health or long term care to those people.

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<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/renewal-data.htm>

Creative ways people are connecting with other disability constituents about Medicaid cuts. Tips on sharing your story.

Spreading the word about Medicaid cuts

- Many people have sent fact sheet, Medicaid story, alerts and action steps to:
 - rare disease, disability specific, or professional organization listservs.
 - National groups or organizations in other states.
 - Network of friends and relatives in other states.
- You can share any materials from us with others.
- If you are looking for specific information about Medicaid, let us know and we may be able to help.

Spreading the word about Medicaid cuts

- Connect with local talk radio (always looking to fill spots)
- Letter to the editor or request for op-ed on Medicaid
- Local media and local podcasts
- Newsletters for local groups (including faith-based communities)
- Podcasts that follow politics, caregiving issues, or disability issues
- We can help you with messaging. Contact Beth or Tami to put together a basic letter to the editor/op-ed.
- We can send message points or pull from presentations for media/radio interviews.

Making a Medicaid story pitch to media

Congress is considering \$2.17 Trillion in federal Medicaid spending cuts that will take money away from states.

Big cuts will impact Wisconsin's state budget, the 1.2 M Wisconsinites who get health and long-term care coverage through programs funded by Medicaid, and Wisconsin's workforce.

People in Medicaid are low-income. Many can't get the health and long term care they need anywhere but Medicaid.

Trillions of dollars in Medicaid cuts hurts low-income pregnant women and kids, people with disabilities, older adults, and people with mental illness.

Federal Medicaid money pays workers' salaries and supports small businesses that provide in-home services in Wisconsin's institution diversion programs (Family Care, IRIS, CLTS), hospitals, county governments, mental health professionals, therapists, school based medical services, and many other jobs in every corner of Wisconsin.

Would you be interested in doing a series on the economic and human impact Medicaid cuts will have everywhere in Wisconsin?

Sample Medicaid letter

Right now, Congress is seriously talking about several ways to make big cuts to Medicaid: a program that provides important health care and community supports to people with disabilities, frail elders, pregnant women and children, and other vulnerable people.

More than a million Wisconsin residents depend on Medicaid for health care coverage, and more than 1 in 3 people with disabilities are on Medicaid.

People with disabilities and older adults depend on Medicaid not just for health care, but for supports in their home like help bathing and meal prep. These supports let people stay in their homes like they want and keep them out of costly nursing homes and facilities.

Many of our local businesses also depend on Medicaid dollars, like therapists, schools, doctors, home health agencies, residential supports, medical equipment and more.

60% of Wisconsin's Medicaid comes from the federal government, but both Congress and our state legislators make decisions on how much is spent and where the money goes.

If you, a loved one, or a business you use depends on Medicaid, now is the time to call your Congressperson, U.S. Senators Baldwin and Johnson, and your state senator and assembly representative. Tell them no cuts to Medicaid.

Be creative where you share your story



Do you have favorite Podcasts?

Use the sample Medicaid letter, add your story, and ask if they are willing to do an episode



Are you on Tic Tock, You Tube, Snapchat or other social media platforms?

Use the story you write today and do a video of yourself talking about what Medicaid means.



Do you have favorite local radio shows?

Use the sample letter and your story and call in or pitch a story to the host?



Do you have favorite newsletters or content creators?

Contact them and suggest Medicaid as an issue they can cover.



Are their local reporters who cover health care issues?

Contact them and pitch a story idea or submit a letter to the editor to your local paper

Disability Advocacy Day March 12th

- Great opportunity to tell state lawmakers how Medicaid impacts your life, your family, your community.
- 600 spots.
- Each person who registers will meet with their state Senator and state Representative
- Don't register unless you are SURE you can come.
 - We have limited spots.
 - Legislators are told in advance the names of the constituents coming.
 - It damages disability community credibility when people don't show up.
- Registration for Disability Advocacy Day will open Monday February 3rd.
- Going? Can you give a ride to other disability constituents coming to Disability Advocacy Day?

Action Step #1: Keep engaging with federal lawmakers. They need to understand Medicaid and understand what Medicaid means to constituents and how lives will change if Medicaid is cut.

5 elected legislative officials represent you



Two U.S. Senators



One U.S. Congressional Representative



One Wisconsin State Senator and one Wisconsin State Representative.

- Program their phone numbers and e-mail into your phone.
- You can e-mail or leave a message any time. It's ok to contact them whenever you can, even at night.
- Don't counsel yourself out of making the connection!
- Plan on checking in and following up frequently.
- **Let us know what you hear from them.** It helps advocates know what messages lawmakers need to hear.

Wisconsin's U.S. Senators



Sen. Ron Johnson (R)

(202) 224-5323

<https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/email-the-senator>

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D)

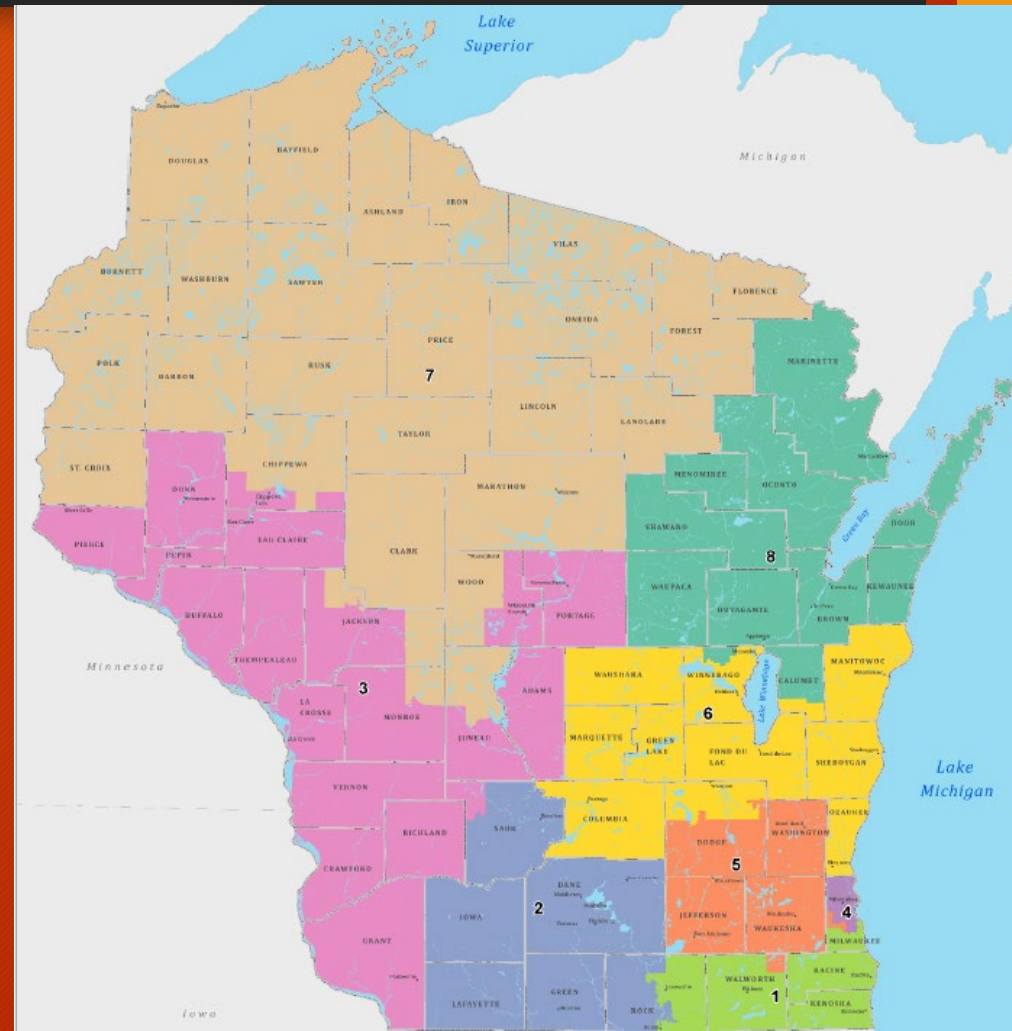
(202) 224-5653

<https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/contact/contact-tammy>

5 elected legislative officials represent you

Federal Government

- Two U.S. Senators
 - Sen. Tammy Baldwin (202) 224-5653
 - Sen. Ron Johnson (202) 224-5323
- One U.S. Congressional Rep.
 - Look up your federal Rep at <https://www.house.gov/>
 - Bryan Steil (1), Mark Pocan (2), Derek VanOrden (3), Gwen Moore (4), Scott Fitzgerald (5), Glenn Grothman (6), Tom Tiffany (7), Tony Wied (8)



Wisconsin U.S. House Representatives

last changed 01/29/2025

Look up your Rep at <https://www.house.gov/>



Rep. Brian Steil

(202) 225-3031



Rep. Marc Pocan

(202) 225-2906



Rep. Derrick Van Orden

(202) 225-5506



Rep. Gwen Moore

(202) 225-4572



Rep. Scott Fitzgerald

(202) 225-5101



Rep. Glenn Grothman

(202) 225-2476



Rep. Tom Tiffany

(202) 225-3365



***Rep. Tony Wied**

(202) 225-5665

Action Step #4: Many people and workers will be impacted by Medicaid cuts. Help other people get information and act themselves.

Are people who get paid by Medicaid contacting lawmakers?

People with disabilities

- Ask your care managers, IRIS Consultants, personal care agencies, therapists, and other people who provide services if they are aware of Medicaid cuts?
- Have they called their federal lawmakers?
- What are their companies doing to tell lawmakers not to cut Medicaid?
- What are their national organizations doing to tell lawmakers not to cut Medicaid.

Professionals, service providers

- Are you making personal calls to your lawmakers?
- Does your company have a position against Medicaid cuts? Have they communicated it to lawmakers?
- Does your professional organization have a position against Medicaid cuts? Have they communicated it to lawmakers?
- Is your organization a member of a national trade association? If the trade association advocating against Medicaid cuts?

Sign up for BPDD e-mails

- We will send out disability policy analysis in real time with steps you can take.
- Sign up at: <https://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/join/>

Federal and State lawmakers need to know how Medicaid helps you and your family, and what it would mean to your life if the services and supports you have are reduced or stopped.