

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 5, 2022

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure,

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant protections for Medicaid enrollees. For Medicaid non-expansion states like Georgia, the continuous coverage requirement required state Medicaid programs to maintain beneficiary eligibility during the public health emergency (PHE) has been a lifeline for Georgians, especially children. We appreciate that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) also understands the critical role Medicaid has played during the pandemic and has issued guidance to assist states with the large volume of eligibility and enrollment redeterminations. Given the risk of significant coverage lost, we believe there is more CMS can do to ensure the transition is as seamless and harmless as possible.

Today, we write to respectfully request that CMS provide additional tools that will assist states in complying with unwinding guidance requirements, especially for non-expansion states which face unique challenges. We encourage CMS to require states to engage with stakeholders to ensure that the concerns and recommendations of Georgia's Medicaid beneficiaries and providers are heard and taken into account. It is also imperative that states support individuals who are no longer eligible for Medicaid during their transitions to the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Marketplace so that they remain insured. Additionally, we ask that CMS provide rigorous oversight throughout the disenrollment process and that states be held fully accountable if there is massive disenrollment, there is a significant increase to the uninsured population, and there are gaps in coverage. We need to ensure that states are upholding their commitment to provide health coverage to the most vulnerable and that redeterminations are evaluated properly to limit the number of people removed from Medicaid coverage.

Many adult beneficiaries who are no longer eligible for Medicaid will be able to enroll in coverage on the Marketplace where, given their income, they would be eligible for Advance Premium Tax Credits (APTCs) allowing them to enroll in affordable health coverage. However, in the 12 Medicaid non-expansion states, many of the adults benefitting from continuous coverage are parents whose income may exceed Georgia's low income eligibility level of 33 percent of the federal poverty line when the PHE ends, but they will not be eligible for APTC's if their income remains below the poverty line. These individuals would therefore fall into the Medicaid coverage gap, adding to the 275,000 in the coverage gap and 500,000 uninsured Georgians already unable to access free and affordable health care. Pregnant and postpartum women have also benefited from the coverage protections. We know you share our concern that these women do not have their coverage disrupted by the unwinding of the continuous coverage protections while they are in the postpartum period.

Many of those who would be impacted by Medicaid disenrollment are children especially in a non-expansion state. A recent report estimates that a minimum of 6.7 million children are at risk of losing free and affordable Medicaid coverage. Children living in Georgia, Florida, and Texas were among those identified as being most at risk.¹ Medicaid is meant to expand health care access to low-income children, families, people with disabilities, seniors, and other adults, and we must uphold the integrity of the program.²

We cannot allow Georgians to go uninsured after surviving a global pandemic, and we must do everything in our power to keep all those eligible for Medicaid enrolled in the lifesaving program. We look forward to your response and stand ready to work with you during this transition.

Sincerely,



Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Carolyn Bourdeaux
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

¹ <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2022/02/17/millions-of-children-may-lose-medicaid-what-can-be-done-to-help-prevent-them-from-becoming-uninsured/>

² <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/using-medicaid-support-working-age-adults-serious-mental-illnesses-community-handbook/brief-history-medicaid>