



Guide to Recess Activities to Protect Medicaid & Medicare August 2012

Medicaid and Medicare are under attack, and need your support. Members of Congress are gearing up for another debt-reduction debate immediately after the election, and they are already looking to Medicaid and Medicare to find savings. Many voices are calling for cuts that would shift costs onto beneficiaries or states, devastate access to care for those already on the program, and make states more likely to reject the ACA's Medicaid expansion in 2014.

August recess provides an opportunity to educate Members of Congress about the importance of Medicaid and Medicare and of protecting them against cuts this year, and to raise the profile of the programs more broadly. You can do this through four key activities:

1. Engage Members of Congress who are home during the August recess.

- **Schedule in-district meetings or phone calls** with Members of Congress and their staff to educate them about the impact of Medicaid and Medicare cuts in your state. Use our [talking points](#), our [sample leave behind](#) about the need to protect Medicaid (you can customize to your state and add your organization's logo), and our [guide to a successful policymaker meeting](#).

NOTE: In direct communication with Members who are already supportive of Medicaid and Medicare, ask them to commit to a higher level of leadership on the issue by taking one or more of [these actions](#).

- **Organize grassroots turnout to town-hall meetings** to emphasize the importance of protecting Medicaid and Medicare
 - Use our [sample questions](#) to highlight the threats to Medicaid and Medicare
 - Encourage current Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries – or their family members – to share their stories about how the programs have helped them, and to ask the member of Congress to stand with them in support of the program
 - Use our [media availability template](#) to draw press attention to your Town Hall activities – and make sure to approach reporters covering the town hall meetings to offer interviews with your spokespeople.
- **Generate calls and letters into the members' office** in support of Medicaid and Medicare and against the current threats as you can. See an [example](#) from advocates in Missouri.

2. Engage the media

- **Submit op-eds and letters to the editor** about the importance of protecting Medicaid and Medicare and the harm of proposals in Congress, or ask supportive stakeholder groups to do so. Two great examples are these op-eds from advocates in [Texas](#) and [Maine](#) from last year's debt-reduction debate. Also see this example from a business groups in [New Hampshire](#), and [this example](#) from a physician in [Rhode Island](#). Use these LTE templates from [an insured Medicaid supporter](#) or [an advocate](#).
- **Hold editorial board meetings** to engage your local paper's editors and shape coverage of the issue. Our [tip sheet](#) gives you the ABCs – from requesting the meeting, to preparation, and having an impact during the meeting.

3. Engage a broader coalition.

See our [checklist of potential organizations and constituencies](#) for ideas on whom else you can engage in this fight. They can help you organize grassroots turnout or join your meetings with Members of Congress to make a larger impact.

4. Engage state-level policymakers.

Since many Medicaid cuts would push costs onto states, schedule meetings with your Governor's administration or state legislative leaders, and ask them to weigh in with Congress and the White House against cuts to Medicaid. You can use [our sample leave behind](#) about the need to protect Medicaid (you can customize to your state or add your organization's logo).