

Communications Toolkit:

Defending Against Block Grants and Other Cuts to Medicaid.

Community Catalyst - September 2019



introduction.

In 2017, Republicans in DC tried and failed to cut Medicaid and the ACA -- which would have cost 20 million people their health insurance. Now, Republicans at the state level are pursuing the same damaging proposals that Americans rejected two years ago. As a group of states, with the encouragement of CMS, have begun formulating proposals to adopt a Medicaid block grant or per capita cap, we have created communications materials to assist in your efforts to defend against these threats.

This toolkit includes research-based materials to help your advocacy at the federal and state levels. We hope these resources will be helpful in your ongoing work to protect Medicaid, keep it strong, and ensure that everyone who needs it can get the health coverage they deserve. Thank you for being a part of the fight.

Contents:

- Key Messages
- Template Letter to the Editor
- Template Op-Ed
- Social Media Materials
 - Social Media Posts
 - Social Media Graphics
 - Sample Use Template

key messages.

Block grants and efforts to limit Medicaid ignore overwhelming public support for the program



Now more than ever it is important that we invest in programs that promote and support working families across the country (and in XX state). Efforts to push partisan agendas simply ignore the will of voters and needs of the people. It's time to stop putting politics ahead of people.



We've seen in poll after poll that voters value Medicaid and want common sense efforts to protect and expand it – not take rushed political steps that take us backwards and fail to protect the health and financial security of low-income Americans the program was designed to help.

Risky financial gamble



Block grants and per capita caps are just code for making deep cuts – a political ruse that hides the fact that there will be fewer dollars for the program long-term which prevents the people who need it most from getting the care they need.



Block grants are a risky financial gamble that limit states' flexibility to manage the unpredictable – with no guarantee of more federal dollars down the road.



No matter what politicians call it –it means massive cuts to Medicaid. With fewer dollars, the idea of flexibility is a farce. And that means states will be forced to take health coverage away from low income parents and hard-working individuals who rely on it to protect them and their families.



When states fully expand Medicaid, the federal government picks up 90% of the bill. It would require an act of Congress to change federal law that now puts this funding formula in place. Every state that chooses not to fully expand Medicaid or uses block grants is leaving money on the table.

Value of Medicaid



Medicaid is health insurance for millions of low-income Americans. It provides life-saving treatment and care to help them get and stay healthy so that they can take care of themselves and their families. Cuts to Medicaid –no matter what you call them – mean these people lose critical care.



Medicaid provides health insurance for low income people who fall on hard times like losing a job or having to care for a sick family member. Block grants limit who and when the program might be there to help. People who work seasonal jobs or are hit by unpredictable changes in employment or family circumstance shouldn't arbitrarily be denied health insurance they need to get back on their feet.



Medicaid helps in times of crisis, allowing states to respond to unpredictable events like the opioid crisis, natural disasters, and the spread of the Zika virus. It also provides an important safety net during economic downturns when people lose jobs and the health insurance that can come with them.



We need to respond to emergencies when they occur. Block grants take away state's flexibility to respond to emergencies like hurricanes, floods, or a recession -and mean there wouldn't be needed funds to act when disaster strikes.

template letter to the editor.

To the editor,

[State's] proposal to convert its Medicaid dollars into a block grant is nothing but a risky experiment that fails to protect the needs of [State] residents. Despite what some politicians might say, block grants limit the dollars our state would have to help the very people Medicaid is designed to protect – the children and families too often left behind. They leave taxpayer dollars on the table in Washington instead of coming home to help provide health care to the people of [State].

Medicaid helps in times of crisis, allowing states to respond to unpredictable events like the opioid crisis, natural disasters, and the spread of the Zika virus. It also provides an important safety net during economic downturns when people lose jobs and the health insurance those jobs provide. We need to respond to emergencies when they occur. Block grants take away [State]'s flexibility to respond to emergencies like hurricanes, floods, or a recession and mean there wouldn't be needed funds to act when disaster strikes.

We've seen in poll after poll that voters value Medicaid and want common sense efforts to protect and expand it – not take rushed political steps that take us backwards and fail to protect the health and financial security of low-income Americans the program was designed to help.

Signed,
XX



template op-ed.



Patients and providers are both strong messengers on this issue, so we have created a template op-ed that you can customize using the story of either a patient or a provider in your community.

Option 1, Patient story:

[Suzy had just gone back to work after the holidays when she felt a lump. She went to the doctor, and sure enough it was cancer. Already faced with the unthinkable, Suzy's troubles only multiplied when she began to talk to her doctor about treatment options. Between the chemotherapy, radiation, surgeries, rehabilitation, and prescription drugs, it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to treat her cancer - and that's hundreds of thousands of dollars that Suzy does not have. Although she works hard to provide for herself and her family, Suzy's employer does not offer health insurance and she cannot afford it on her own. To Suzy, deciding whether to treat her cancer literally means deciding between her health and bankruptcy.]

Option 2, Provider story:

[Suzy had just gone back to work after the holidays when she felt a lump. She went to the doctor, and sure enough it was cancer. Already faced with the unthinkable, Suzy's troubles only multiplied when she began to talk to her doctor about treatment options. Between the chemotherapy, radiation, surgeries, rehabilitation, and prescription drugs, it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to treat her cancer - and that's hundreds of thousands of dollars that Suzy does not have. Although she works hard to provide for herself and her family, Suzy's employer does not offer health insurance and she cannot afford it on her own. To Suzy, deciding whether to treat her cancer literally means deciding between her health and bankruptcy.]

[Suzy] did not get to choose if she got cancer – and state lawmakers shouldn't get to choose whether she gets the coverage she needs to protect her from the unexpected. That's why it's important that lawmakers in [State] stop their rush to cut and cap Medicaid in our state in ways that roll the dice with people's lives.

Medicaid is health insurance for millions of low-income Americans. It provides life-saving treatment and care to help them get and stay healthy so that they can take care of themselves and their families. Cuts to Medicaid –no matter what you call them – mean these people lose critical care.

We've seen in poll after poll that voters value Medicaid and want common sense efforts to protect and expand it – not take rushed political steps that take us backwards and fail to protect the health and financial security of low-income Americans the program was designed to help.

Unfortunately, in our state that is exactly what lawmakers are attempting to do with threats to fund Medicaid through block grants. Right now, the federal government pays [\$\$] amount of

Medicaid costs here in [State], no matter how much costs fluctuate because of unpredictable factors like rising drug prices, a natural disaster or an economic downturn. Block grants limit the federal dollars our state gets, and fewer dollars prevent the people who need it most from getting the care they need, when they need it. At their essence, block grants are a risky financial gamble that limit states' flexibility to manage the unpredictable -- with no guarantee of more federal funding down the road. That means when the unexpected occurs and drains [State]'s allocated Medicaid funding, it can't reach out to the federal government for more but instead will be forced to kick people off coverage or cut critical services for children and families --and people like [Suzy].

When people lose their Medicaid coverage and become uninsured, they will still need to get medical care. The only difference is that these costs will now be passed on to everyone else in the form of higher insurance premiums and more uncompensated care. That does nothing to improve anyone's health and means everyone pays a higher price.

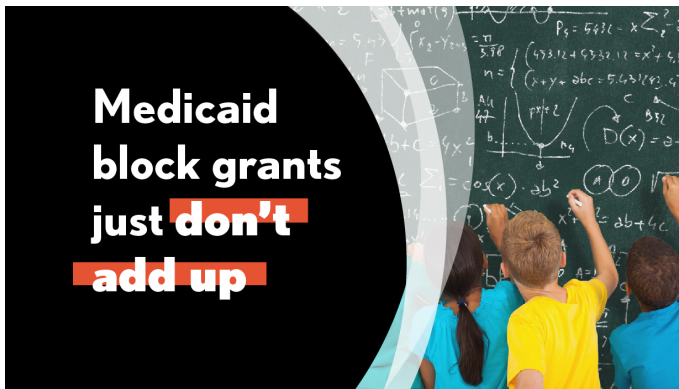
Block grants are an experiment in fuzzy math. No state currently has a Medicaid block grant -- and for good reason. They are fiscal handcuffs that do nothing but dangle an empty promise of "flexibility" with the reality of cutting federal funds. They leave taxpayer dollars on the table in Washington instead of coming home to help provide health care to the people of [State].

Now more than ever it is important that we invest in programs that promote and support working families across the country and in [State]. Efforts to push partisan agendas simply ignore the needs of the people. It's time to stop putting politics ahead of people.

social media.

Downloadable Graphics

To download, right-click on the image and select "download," or follow [this link](#) and download directly to your desktop.



Sample Posts



#Voters value #Medicaid and want common sense efforts to protect and expand it – not rushed political steps that take us backwards like #BlockGrants.



#Medicaid is a health insurance program that protects the lowest-income in our state. #BlockGrants take this safety net away from those who need it most.



#BlockGrants are a risky financial gamble that limit states' flexibility to manage the unpredictable -- with no guarantee of more federal assistance down the road.



#BlockGrants are an experiment in fuzzy math. No state currently has a #Medicaid block grant, and for good reason.



#BlockGrants leave taxpayer dollars on the table in Washington instead of coming home to help provide health care to the people of #State.



Take the mask off of #BlockGrants and you'll see that they're just cuts to Medicaid that take us backward.



Still haunted by math class? #State legislators seem to be, too. #BlockGrants are an experiment in fuzzy math.

Sample Use Template

My Twitter Account
@TwitterAccount

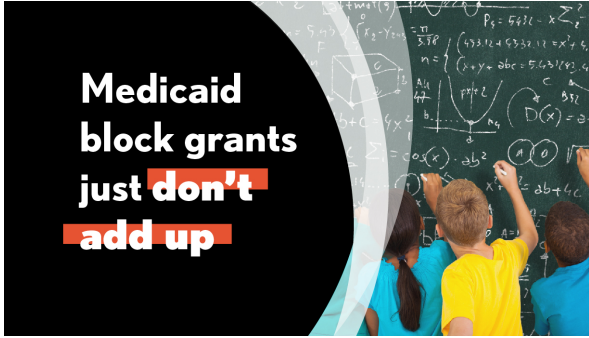
Take the mask off of #BlockGrants and you'll see that they're just cuts to #Medicaid that take us backward.



**Block grants
are cuts to
Medicaid
in disguise**

My Twitter Account
@TwitterAccount

Still haunted by math class? #State legislators seem to be, too. #BlockGrants are an experiment in fuzzy math.



**Medicaid
block grants
just don't
add up**