

SF494 Public Hearing Comments
Chaney Yeast, Blank Children's Hospital
Registered Opposed

Medicaid is an important safety net for every single Iowan. We are all just one accident or serious illness away from needing to rely on Medicaid. Medicaid is especially important to Iowa children. Currently, half of all births in Iowa are covered by Medicaid, and 1 out of 2 Iowa children under 18 rely on Medicaid for their health care insurance. That includes important building blocks for child health and well-being such as well-child visits and childhood immunizations to treatments for complex medical conditions such as diabetes, seizure disorders, cystic fibrosis and childhood cancers.

[Studies](#) have [found](#) all sorts of [benefits](#) of Medicaid enrollment, from a [reduction in debt and credit problems](#) to better [school attendance for kids and even improved high school graduation rates](#).

Studies also show Medicaid is linked to improved patient access to health and mental health care in rural communities. Medicaid is linked to greater increases in income among low-income individuals and contributed to decreased levels of income inequality. One study even found an association between Medicaid and decreased odds of job loss. That is because healthy Iowans are fully able to engage in the workplace and contribute to the state's economy.

Medicaid is also the backbone that supports our pediatric and rural health care providers in Iowa. It is not uncommon for the payor mix of rural and pediatric health care providers to be up to 65% Medicaid. For those business models to succeed, Iowa's Medicaid program must be strong and well-funded.

Which is why support of SF 494 makes absolutely no sense. The fiscal note estimates that 8,000 Medicaid members, 600 Hawki members and 2,800 SNAP recipients will lose their coverage due to discrepancies caused by the increased administrative hurdles which this bill would create. Not fraud reduction, as the Senate stated, but eligible lowans being disenrolled because of paperwork errors and missed deadlines. I don't believe we have heard a single proponent in favor of this bill say eligible lowans wouldn't lose their benefits because we all know from the experience of other states that the so-called savings comes from eligible recipients losing their benefits. That also means the state of Iowa turning away millions of federal Medicaid matching dollars that we have already paid for with our federal taxes. Even if you aren't concerned about Iowa children losing their health care coverage, why would we turn away millions of dollars in federal funds that lowans have already invested?

That is no cost savings to the Iowa taxpayer. If people lose their insurance coverage that means they will seek less preventive health and mental health care, they will put off going to the doctor for illnesses and conditions which will become more severe, requiring more emergency room visits and inpatient hospitalizations. You should be concerned about this because when more uninsured patients seek more intensive health care interventions, those costs are passed along to all lowans in terms of higher costs of health care at your doctor's office and higher insurance premiums for private plans.

Please use common sense. Please protect health care coverage for Iowa children. Please oppose SF494.