



GEORGIANS FOR A
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PRESS RELEASE

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Health Care Advocates Express Concern about Potential Health Care Cutbacks

Atlanta, GA-- As advocates for children, families, and consumers in Georgia, we are concerned about recent attempts within states to scale back vital health care programs for our most vulnerable citizens at a time when they are critically needed. The move began with Arizona Governor Brewer's request to the federal government for a waiver from stability protections that prevent states from restricting eligibility levels for the Medicaid program. In response, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal's spokesperson was quoted by Bloomberg news organization earlier today that while the Governor has not offered specific cuts, he "would happily work on such a proposal."

"Rolling back eligibility among those already enrolled in our state Medicaid program essentially would strip medical coverage for those who are the youngest, oldest, and the sickest within our state," stated Joann Yoon, Associate Policy Director for Child Health with Voices for Georgia's Children. "Medicaid especially is essential at a time like the present when many face unemployment, which also means a loss of employer-sponsored coverage."

Medicaid not only provides essential health care services for vulnerable Georgians, but is also an integral part of our state's health care economy.

"Cutting health care coverage for consumers and patients would mean more difficulty accessing primary care and managing chronic conditions, resulting in poorer health outcomes for our citizens and greater costs down the line," stated Cindy Zeldin, Executive Director of Georgians for a Healthy Future. "These cuts also would exacerbate the economic downturn in Georgia, negatively impacting the doctors, pharmacies, and hospitals who rely on Medicaid reimbursement funds."

We recognize that Georgia faces serious fiscal challenges and that our budget crisis warrants thoughtful and creative solutions, but we can think of no worse way to address such challenges than by opening up the floodgates to a series of cuts in health care coverage.

"We urge all Georgians to strongly oppose any efforts to weaken a system meant to be a safety net for our most vulnerable citizens," said Holly Lang, Hospital Accountability Project Director at nonprofit consumer watchdog Georgia Watch. "We welcome the opportunity to work with Governor Deal and our lawmakers to find smarter, more efficient ways to tackle our state's budgetary issues."

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