Talking Points for Advocates about Medicaid Cuts and Caps

Background

After a dramatic defeat on repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) this summer, Senate Republicans are considering the Graham-Cassidy health care reform bill, which again proposes to repeal and replace the ACA and to cut and cap Medicaid. Senate Majority leadership is trying to move this bill through both chambers of Congress on a fast-track process in fewer than 12 legislative days. Despite support for a transparent, inclusive, bipartisan process that Republicans and Democrats promoted following defeat of the last Senate attempt to repeal and replace the ACA and restructure Medicaid, two Republican Senators are closer than ever to pushing through another bill that would increase costs and reduce coverage for older adults. This is not just the ACA’s Medicaid “expansion population” to be clear—this is ALL of Medicaid, including the in-home and nursing home care provided to millions of vulnerable older adults.

Like its predecessors in the House and the Senate, the Graham-Cassidy proposal would shift the current federal-state funding formula for Medicaid to a “per-capita cap”: no matter how costs rise, the federal government only pays a set amount per person, vs. a guaranteed percentage of the total cost. This leaves states holding the bag if the need for Medicaid services rises—such as greater demand for long-term care as our nation ages rapidly—and makes it too easy for the feds to let their share of the funding erode in the future. Unfortunately, we won’t know just how devastating these cuts or coverage losses will be under this proposal because the Senate—and possibly the House—is prepared to pass this bill into law without a full analysis from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office. We do know however, that the implications could seriously jeopardize critical Medicaid services for millions of older adults.

Talking Points

Medicaid is Critical to the Health and Well-Being of Millions of Older Adults

- It makes no sense to undermine the only long-term care option available to most Americans just as our country undergoes a transformational demographic shift to an aging nation.
- Medicaid pays 60 percent of long-term care—more than any other source.
- Graham-Cassidy cuts Medicaid, both acute care and long-term care. It does this by capping the amount of money the federal government contributes to Medicaid, which means states will be on the hook to cover federal cuts. States cannot absorb these costs!
- The cuts in Graham-Cassidy could result in higher Medicaid costs and reduced care, including co-pays and premiums for consumers, and waiting lists for services.
- We must preserve Medicaid’s safety net guarantee in order to keep older adults healthy and living safely in their homes and communities!
- Add your own talking points as to what would Medicaid cuts mean in your local community?