



## **Unintended Consequences: How the Budget Reconciliation Bill Risks Harming People with Down Syndrome**

The House Reconciliation Bill's Medicaid proposals—though well-intended—could harm people with Down syndrome, their families, and the professionals who care for them. These provisions will reduce essential supports, increase bureaucracy, and destabilize already strained caregiving systems. For more details and evidence supporting the following points, please see NDSC's policy brief, *[“Medicaid at Risk: What the Reconciliation Bill Means for People with Down Syndrome”](#)*.

### **Key Concerns & Talking Points**

#### **1. Cuts to Medicaid Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) Will Increase**

- HCBS waivers allow people with Down syndrome to live independently with supports like personal care, job coaching, and respite services.
- Cuts to Medicaid funding will force states to reduce these "optional" services, worsening waitlists and increasing institutionalization.
- Any reduction in the federal share of Medicaid will put more pressure on state budgets.
- Example: Idaho passed legislation in anticipation of Medicaid cuts to eliminate optional benefits—this harms vulnerable populations.

#### **2. Work Requirements Will Lead to Coverage Loss**

- Work requirements don't increase employment; instead, they increase bureaucracy and drop eligible people from Medicaid.
- In Arkansas, 18,000 *eligible* people lost coverage in 7 months due to red tape.

- Though exemptions exist in the bill for people with disabilities, some will still need to file paperwork to prove their exemptions.
- The system is error-prone—many eligible people will lose coverage due to paperwork issues.
- Family caregivers and Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), many of whom rely on Medicaid, could also lose coverage or be pushed out of the workforce.

### **3. Threats to the DSP Workforce**

- Nearly 25% of DSPs rely on Medicaid for health coverage.
- They are already working 2-3 jobs and will be more likely to leave the DSP workforce due to additional burdensome paperwork or loss of coverage.
- Medicaid work requirements could worsen the direct care staffing crisis—leading to service disruptions for people with Down syndrome.

### **4. Provider Tax Restrictions Will Hurt State Budgets**

- Preventing states from adjusting provider taxes strips them of a key tool to fund Medicaid.
- States may be forced to cut HCBS and other essential services, hurting people with disabilities.

### **5. Reduction in Retroactive Coverage Harms New Families**

- Cutting retroactive Medicaid/CHIP coverage from 90 to 30 days will financially burden families of newborns with Down syndrome.
- Many families are unaware of eligibility and need more than 30 days to apply for Medicaid—especially during medical crises.

### **Urge your Senators to:**

- ☒ Oppose Medicaid cuts and work requirements
- ☒ Vote NO on the Reconciliation Bill