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## [Advocates Warn of Impact Medicaid Cuts Will Have](#)

02.18.2010 by [Emily Rodriguez-Vargas](#)



Andrew  
Riggle

(KCPW News) Advocates are speaking out about steep cuts state legislators are making to Utah's Medicaid program as they try to balance the budget. In a press conference at the Capitol Wednesday, the Utah Medicaid Partnership said reductions in these services will have a detrimental impact on the future of Utahns of all ages. Andrew Riggle, a public policy advocate at the Disability Law Center, said that Medicaid is a life support people rely on. He's a beneficiary of state services himself due to cerebral palsy.

“For a good number of these services and supports that people access, there are no private alternatives. Either these folks can't access private insurance, or the kinds of services and supports that they need aren't covered by private insurance, or aren't available in the amount that they need,” said Riggle.

The Utah Medicaid Partnership says cutting the Medically Needy program would impact 4,000 children and pregnant women, resulting in higher rates of child mortality and health problems. Lincoln Nehring with the Utah Health Policy Project said while it would cost the state \$890,000 to maintain the program, the price of losing these services is immeasurable.

“The impact is significant, and it would have a dramatic impact on peoples' lives. That program serves about 4,000 people and they necessarily wouldn't still qualify for Medicaid, they still might, but a lot of them would have to quit their jobs. And that's not what we want to make families do when they're facing this type of health care crisis.”

Health care advocates believe the state should tap into the Rainy Day Fund or pass a tobacco tax increase in order to maintain programs.