



Medicaid Enrollees

SPEAK UP

Medicaid is an important safety net for hard times...



Dr. Rodney Bluth

Dr. Bluth is an emergency room physician who lives with multiple sclerosis. After his diagnosis, Dr. Bluth had to stop working. Suddenly he found himself uninsured. Fortunately, he was able to enroll in Medicaid, which helped him get through this difficult time and back on his feet.

Proposed Medicaid Budget Cuts Have Life-Changing Consequences

Dr. Rodney Bluth is an emergency room physician who treated many patients on Medicaid. He never thought he would join the Medicaid rolls. But, after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, he needed to stop working. *"It was humbling to enroll, but it was everything to know my wife and I could get our health care from Medicaid."*

Today, Dr. Bluth once again has private insurance and is successfully managing his disease. But these experiences gave him a unique perspective about Medicaid. He has seen it from both sides—as a consumer and as a provider. He truly understands that Medicaid plays a critical role in providing health coverage for otherwise uninsured citizens. It is a safety net that catches Utahns and helps get them through hard times.

A Policy Solution: Prioritize Medicaid in the economic downturn

The Legislature should take great care as they look to shave dollars from Utah Medicaid. Medicaid delivers quality, medically necessary care at the right price for all payers—including the taxpayer. It is also a powerful economic driver for our state. Before making cuts, the Legislature should:

- Maximize cost containment measured within Medicaid, such as strengthening the Preferred Drug List or converting Medicaid managed care contracts to a full risk capitated basis.
- Take concrete steps to maximize federal funding and fiscal relief. To qualify for the \$175 to \$315 million in federal stimulus money, Utah must maintain our current investment in Medicaid. By cutting programs like the waivers, Utah loses millions of federal dollars that could keep our program whole *and* stimulate the economy.
- Consider new revenue sources, such as the tobacco tax, rainy day fund or bonding.

All cuts are not equal. Health and human services should be held harmless in the recession.