

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute



For the families of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities



**For Immediate Action
Time Sensitive**

Action Alert

For Information Only

[Take Action – Email your Senators now](#)

Proposed Medicaid cuts would have a devastating impact on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If your loved one:

- lives in a group home
- has the help of a job coach
- attends a day program
- receives respite services or
- behavioral supports

then **MEDICAID MATTERS** to YOU.

Did you know that special education is hugely reliant on Medicaid and that it helps pay for therapies (such as OT and PT), equipment and specialized transportation? If your child depends on those types of supports, then **MEDICAID MATTERS** to YOU.

These are just a few examples of the many, many things Medicaid makes possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. That is why we need your help. Tell your representatives that **MEDICAID MATTERS** to YOU.



The Senate is working fast to pass a bill that will cut and cap Medicaid - and they MUST hear from you!

**CLICK HERE
to Take Action!**

The House already passed a bill that would cut Medicaid by over \$830 billion, and open the door to repealing major health care protections like coverage for people with pre-existing conditions. You can learn more about the House's dangerous bill [here](#).

Why is the Senate considering cuts that would devastate people with disabilities? Millions of people like Bryan, featured in the video below, would be greatly affected by any cuts to Medicaid. Medicaid's home and community based services are "optional" for states and are likely to be the first things to go, leaving Bryan and others like him at risk for being institutionalized.

Watch this video to hear what people with disabilities and their families would say to Congress.



If I could say one thing

We appreciate all your calls and advocacy over these past few months and we know we can count on you to keep fighting.

For additional information, see [The Arc's fact sheet about Medicaid](#).

Your Advocacy Tool Belt

We know that calling your representatives may feel overwhelming. We want to help you feel more comfortable and confident in your advocacy role. Below are some resources to help. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us fap@arcnj.org.



Commonly Used Legislative Lingo

Appropriation: The money allocated if a bill becomes law.
Bill: A proposal to establish a new law, or to change, clarify or repeal an existing law.
Bipartisanship: agreement or cooperation of between political parties
Budget: The amount of money that is available for, required for, or assigned to a particular purpose.
Congressional Districts: One of 13 districts in New Jersey from which a representative is elected. The districts are established by state law and are redrawn following a census to maintain an equal population in each district.
Constituents: A resident of a legislator's district.
Fiscal Year (FY): An accounting period of 12 months. In New Jersey State government, it's period runs from July 1 to June 30. The Federal government's fiscal year is the period of October 1 to September 30.
Floor: The area of the legislative chamber occupied by the members and staff of the house. A legislator "has the floor" when he or she has been granted permission by the presiding officer to address the house.
Legislative District: One of the forty areas in New Jersey from which one senator and two General Assembly members are elected. Districts, many of which cross county lines, are established by a special Apportionment Commission and are reapportioned.
Legislative Information and Bill Room (LIBR): A unit under the Director of Public Information of the Office of Legislative Services that supply a variety of information about the Legislature to legislators and the public.

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute 100 Livingston Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 1702.246.2629
<http://www.thearcnj.org/familyinstitute>

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[Commonly Used Legislative Lingo](#)



Build a Relationship with Your Legislators

You are an expert! Every day you deal with issues as a family member of someone with an intellectual or developmental disability. Your representatives need to learn from you about what the issues are and ways government can help. The key to having your voice heard is to build a relationship with your representatives.

- 1. Know your legislator and their staff.**
 - If you haven't met them, set up a meeting or write a letter to introduce yourself. The legislator's personal or the legislator's family elected and may not know the issue. Legislative schedules can be tricky, so be patient when trying to make an appointment.
- 2. The information you provide your legislators should be understandable, accurate, and persuasive.**
 - During personal stories about your family's experiences related to the issue, it's a good way to put a human face to a problem. When talking about issues or programs don't assume your audience knows the info.
- 3. Don't be afraid to ask how they intend to vote on specific issues and why.**
 - If they do not intend to vote your way, continue to build your relationship and share information that may sway their opinion.
 - Other legislators do support your position. Get them made. Send them letters of thanks and share them with the editor of your local newspaper, come out on their support publicly. You would hate for them to feel unappreciated the next time you ask for their help.
- 4. Work with a legislator's staff.**
 - Staff members research, research, draft bills, make recommendations on environments and develop expertise in areas in which their legislator cannot devote the time.
- 5. Attend town council meetings, school board meetings, rallies, and other forums that are open to the public.**
 - They will give you the opportunity to meet them personally. In the future, keep up to date on developments or needs to the issue, and voice your opinion.

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[How to Build a Relationship with your Legislators](#)

TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO ACTION ALERTS When Calling Your Legislators

Have this information in front of you when you call so that you can access it if needed.

State that you are a constituent and calling about an issue or a Bill that is up for vote.
 Do not worry if you do not get to speak to the legislator directly, it is common for staff to answer calls.

Use People First Language when discussing your loved one.
 • I.e. My older Samantha has a developmental disability. NOT My developmentally disabled older Samantha.

Make sure to **give them your contact information** so they can get back to you with information or to ask you follow up questions.

Clearly state what the issue is and what you are asking for. Try to stick to one key issue.
Keep your message short and simple.



State why the issue matters to you and how it will affect your family.
 • I.e. "My son has a developmental disability and this will directly affect our family's life. If more community based housing is not created, my son will have nowhere to go if something were to happen to my husband and I."

If you do not know the answer to a question, be honest. Let them know you will get back to them. Make sure to follow up later with the answer.

Ask for a commitment
 • I.e. "Can I count on the Senator to vote yes/no on this issue?"
Always be polite and thank them for listening to your concerns.

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[Tips for responding to action alerts when calling](#)

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