

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: April 13, 2023
RE: Standing Up for Medicaid

Hart Research conducted a survey for Caring Across Generations to examine voters' views and impressions of Medicaid, and to identify effective messages to both reinforce the importance of Medicaid and push back against proposed Republican Medicaid cuts and work requirements. The survey was conducted from March 21 to 26, 2023, among a representative national cross section of 1,005 voters.

Broad Opposition to Republican Medicaid Cuts: The survey findings reveal that supporters of protecting and expanding Medicaid are in a strong position. Medicaid is a popular program that voters overwhelmingly want to protect from harmful cuts. Voters oppose Republican Medicaid cuts by a wide margin, with even a majority of Republican voters opposed; and there is broad support for expansion of Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

- 1. Broad recognition of the difficulty that many Americans face in affording healthcare is an important backdrop to the debate over Republicans' proposed cuts to Medicaid.** Most voters agree that healthcare costs too much (85%) and is difficult for most Americans to afford (87%); this very high level of agreement spans party lines. There is also broad consensus that it is government's responsibility to ensure access to affordable healthcare, with 81% of voters in agreement, including 95% of Democrats, 82% of independents, and 66% of Republicans.
- 2. Large majorities of voters across party lines view Medicaid favorably, and three in five personally know someone who benefits from the program.** Overall, 72% of voters have a favorable view (32% very favorable, 40% somewhat favorable) of Medicaid and 19% have an unfavorable view (8% very unfavorable, 11% somewhat unfavorable); 9% do not know enough to have an opinion. Medicaid is particularly popular among Democrats (83% favorable, 9% unfavorable), but Republican voters (65% favorable, 28% unfavorable) and independent voters (65% favorable, 22% unfavorable) are favorable by wide margins.

Three in five (60%) voters personally know someone who benefits from the Medicaid program, including 17% who say they personally benefit and 28% who say they or an immediate family member benefits.

- 3. Voters overwhelmingly favor protecting Medicaid from harmful cuts, and they oppose Republicans' proposed cuts to Medicaid by a wide three-to-one margin.** Fully 84% of voters think Congress should place a higher priority on protecting Medicaid from harmful cuts that would reduce access to care, while only 16% think the higher priority should be cutting Medicaid to get federal spending under control. Agreement is widespread across party lines, with 93% of Democrats, 88% of independents, and 74% of Republicans placing a higher priority on protecting Medicaid from cuts.

When asked about Congressional Republican proposals to "make very large cuts to Medicaid," 76% of voters overall are opposed and just 24% are supportive. Democrats oppose Republican proposals to make very large cuts to Medicaid by 89% to 11%, and independent voters oppose it by nearly as wide a margin (82% oppose, 18% support). Even when these proposals are branded as proposals by Republicans in Congress, Republican voters oppose them by 62% to 38%.

- 4. Support is widespread for Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), even among Republicans who are unfavorable toward the ACA. A large majority of voters also oppose repealing Medicaid expansion provisions of the ACA.** While the ACA, which also was identified as "Obamacare," is viewed favorably by a majority of voters overall (57% favorable, 36% unfavorable), opinions of it vary notably by party. Democrats (83% favorable, 11% unfavorable) express overwhelmingly favorable views of the ACA, and the majority of independents (56% favorable, 34% unfavorable) are favorable; but Republicans are unfavorable by two to one (31% favorable, 62% unfavorable).

Despite this partisan polarization around the Affordable Care Act, voters support expansion of Medicaid coverage under the ACA by four to one: 80% support, 20% oppose. Democrats are most supportive (95% support, 5% oppose) and most independents favor it (85% support, 16% oppose), but even a solid majority of Republicans support it (62% support, 38% oppose).

Furthermore, by a substantial margin, voters would oppose repealing the Medicaid expansion provisions of the ACA if it meant that 20 million low-income Americans could lose their health coverage: 27% support, 73% oppose. Not only do large majorities of Democrats (16% support, 84% oppose) and independents (23% support, 77% oppose) oppose repeal, but so do a solid majority of Republicans (40% support, 60% oppose).

5. **By 58% to 42%, voters oppose a proposal that would “take Medicaid away from people who do not meet work requirements.”**

This framing of “taking away Medicaid” is important, and it elicits notable opposition. Democrats oppose it by a very wide margin (23% favor, 77% oppose) and a solid majority of independents also oppose it (37% favor, 63% oppose). Republicans, on the other hand, favor it by 62% to 38%. That is because nearly half of Republicans who oppose very large cuts to Medicaid favor taking it away from people who do not meet work requirements. Still, it is notable and important that nearly two in five Republicans would oppose this.

Voters are more concerned that many people in poor health or who have a disability could lose their healthcare (58%) than that many people will abuse the system and receive benefits instead of trying to support themselves (42%).

6. **There is an opportunity to reinforce the importance of Medicaid in ensuring access to long-term care and leverage voters’ desire for Congress to expand the availability of affordable home care.**

If they or a family member were to need long-term care, voters overwhelmingly would prefer that the care came from a provider at home (87%) than in a nursing home or other care facility (13%). They recognize, however, that it is difficult to afford the cost of home care (84% difficult) and to find a quality care provider (75% difficult).

It is within this context that 86% of voters think Congress should take action to improve the availability of quality, affordable home and community care, including 58% who feel strongly about this. Fully 98% of Democrats, 86% of independents, and 75% of Republicans agree. Only 14% think Congress should not take this action.

A compelling case can be made for maintaining funding for home and community-based care through Medicaid by acknowledging the role that Medicaid plays in ensuring access to long-term care and highlighting the home care needs of seniors, children, and people with disabilities.

Making the Case against Republican Medicaid Cuts: The most effective way to push back against Republican proposals to cut Medicaid and impose work requirements is to frame the debate around the consequences of these cuts—who and how many would be affected. Opposition messaging should force Republicans to defend these consequences.

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- a. The most effective frame to push back against Republican cuts to Medicaid focuses on the Americans who would be affected:
 - **Medicaid is an essential program that 88 million Americans rely on for their healthcare, including 54 million Americans who are seniors, children, or people with disabilities. The proposed Republican cuts to Medicaid would:**
 - ❑ **Risk healthcare coverage for eight million seniors;**
 - ❑ **Cut coverage for more than three million children of active military members and veterans, as well as children in low-income families; and**
 - ❑ **Threaten health coverage for people with severe mental and physical disabilities.**

- b. The most compelling messages to oppose Republicans' proposed work requirements for Medicaid would also focus on the impacts of taking Medicaid away from millions of Americans:
 - **The Republican plan to take Medicaid away from people who do not meet new work requirements would:**
 - ❑ **Mean that people who are in poor health or who have a disability could lose their healthcare; and**
 - ❑ **Hurt older people ages 50 to 65, including those with disabilities, for whom there are few job opportunities.**

- c. There also is an opportunity to leverage voters' overwhelming preference for home care and their concern about affordability and quality of long-term care by highlighting the role Medicaid plays in ensuring access to long-term care broadly and home and community-based care specifically with the following message:
 - **Cuts to Medicaid would mean that fewer families would be able to get home and community care services for their loved ones, and many seniors and people with disabilities would lose their choice of how to receive their care.**

- d. When fighting to oppose repeal of Medicaid expansion provisions in the ACA or pushing to advance expansion of Medicaid coverage under the ACA, focus attention on the expansion of coverage for people who would benefit. To the extent possible, avoid making this about the ACA, which Republicans view unfavorably.

- e. After highlighting the millions of Americans who would lose healthcare due to Medicaid cuts or a work requirement, it is effective to pivot to an alternative broadly popular proposal to reduce the deficit—making wealthy and big corporations pay their fair share:
- **Instead of cutting Medicaid and taking healthcare away from people, Congress should do more to make the wealthy and big corporations pay their fair share.** (Fully 83% of all voters agree, including 97% of Democrats, 85% of independents, and 69% of Republicans.)

Key Message Points for Pushing Back on GOP Medicaid Cuts and Work Requirements

- Medicaid is an essential program that 88 million Americans rely on for their healthcare, including 54 million who are either seniors, children, or people with disabilities. The proposed Republican cuts to Medicaid would:
 - ❑ Risk healthcare coverage for eight million seniors;
 - ❑ Cut coverage for more than three million children of active military members and veterans, as well as children of low-income families;
 - ❑ Threaten health coverage for people with severe mental and physical disabilities.
- The Republican plan to take Medicaid away from people who do not meet new work requirements would:
 - ❑ Mean that people who are in poor health or who have a disability could lose their healthcare
 - ❑ Hurt older people ages 50 to 65, including those with disabilities, for whom there are few job opportunities.

Instead of cutting Medicaid and taking healthcare away from people, Congress should do more to make the wealthy and big corporations pay their fair share.