Access

A monthly look inside Carey Services

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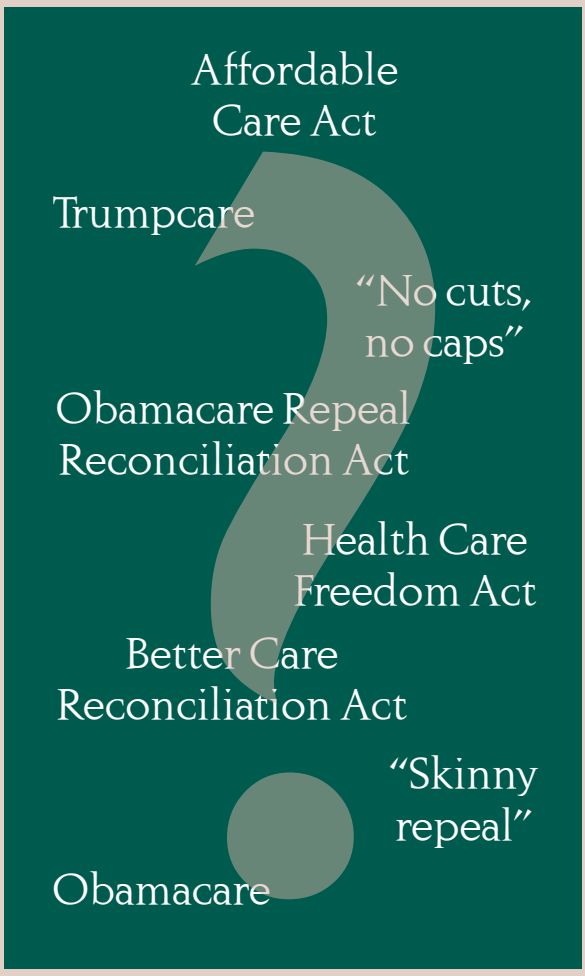
Medicaid cuts would cause much harm



There has been a lot of discussion around repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act. In the past week, the airwaves have been filled with news on the Senate's unsucessful attempt to do something to change the ACA.

I feel it is my duty as president/CEO of Carey Services, a provider of choice for services for individuals with disabilities and children and families in our Early Head Start program, to educate and increase awareness to an issue that hasn't received nearly as much attention.

Regardless of the specific proposal being mentioned, all of them proposed large Medicaid cuts that would jeopardize critical care for individuals with disabilities and their families. This could have devastating consequences for individuals with disabilities and low-income families not only in Indiana, but in every state.

When most people think of Medicaid, our nation's safety net health care program and the funding source for many services Carey Services provides, they think of services for very low-income children, mothers, and low-income workers. Those groups are deeply important to Carey Services, and I believe they will be negatively impacted if large cuts to Medicaid occur. It is important to know that a large amount of Medicaid spending occurs to help people with disabilities simply live their lives. Currently 79 percent of Medicaid recipients are children, adults with disabilities and seniors.

The majority of the individuals we serve rely on Medicaid to help them receive these life-sustaining services. Without our services, they would not be able to be as independent as they can, living a meaningful life in the community.

As our country's population of individuals with disabilities grows, the need for Medicaid long-term supports and services increases. Many of us at some point in our lives may be in need of critical long-term care services, and Medicaid is the country's only guaranteed provider.

Proposed Medicaid cuts could change the trajectory of providing long-term care in homes and communities instead of institutions. Proposals that curb Medicaid spending by capping the federal government's share and pushing these costs on to states may put many of the people we serve at risk.

States could be forced to make choices that may deeply negatively impact those who depend upon Medicaid for their health and safety. Individuals with disabilities and low income families could lose the amount of care and service they receive or could be required to pay for services despite having income limitations that qualify them for Medicaid. The cost of insurance for individuals we serve could increase dramatically. Families seeking care for a loved one could encounter long wait lists for services, and cuts to provider rates will harm the long-term care workforce that is already stretched considerably.

It makes no sense to undermine the only long-term care option available to many Americans with disabilities just as our country undergoes a demographic shift to a growing group of people with disabilities and an older adult population. If we want to save federal health care dollars, we should expand the most cost-effective care options instead of eliminating them. Medicaid-funded programs preserve the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and low-income families in North Central Indiana and across the state and country; they also save taxpayers tens of billions of dollars each year in avoided nursing home and other institutional costs.

The people we serve deserve better. We encourage our U.S. House and Senate elected officials to reject cuts to Medicaid.

Jim Allbaugh — President & CEO, Carey Services

Hard work key to overcoming life's challenges

Caring & Serving

Inspiring stories of Carey Services client success

For the full article, go to:
www.careyservices.com/caringserving

Matt Mitchell hasn't let challenges in life slow him down.

He's involved in many community activities and recently started a community job with a local restaurant.

Matt was born with Williams' syndrome, which has only 30,000 diagnosed cases worldwide.

"I don't let the Williams syndrome affect me or stop me from living a normal life because I have always had a supportive family and great friends," Matt said. As an example, he talked about times his brothers would always stand up for him when other kids didn't understand what William's syndrome was.

People with William's syndrome typically have trouble with spatial tasks, such as reading and assembling puzzles, but many have engaging personalities and can be good in social interactions.

One of Matt's long-term goals has been to get a community job. As a high school sophomore, he started thinking about his future and finding ways to be able to get out of his house more. He knew it was time to get a job. Like many teenagers, he wanted to be more independent and have his own spending money.

Through his work with Carey Services' employment services program and production facility, he has improved his strengths and developed new skills that have helped him as he recently started working at McDonald's.

While working with employment specialist Karen Willhite, Matt has been able to receive a variety of services including job readiness training, interviewing preparation and support and job placement.

It's not all work and no play, though.

Matt has participated in Faceplace, a program at Community School of the Arts in which many participants include individuals we serve. He has portrayed Elvis in the play *Blue Christmas*, had a small role in *Beauty and the Beast* and he also was part of the cast in a production based on the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*.

"Matt has come a long way and has done such a great job," said Willhite, the employment specialist who helped Matt through parts of the process. "He's doing a good job and he definitely likes meeting new people and running into people he already knows."

Part of the job also involves being an unofficial greeter, since he's in the restaurant's seating area much of the time. Meeting people isn't a problem.

NAP tax credits again available to agency donors

Carey Services has again been awarded Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credits.

Individuals and businesses who donate to Carey Services through NAP are able to take a tax credit on their Indiana state income tax return for 50 percent of the amount of the donation and reduce their tax liability to the state. Donors also can claim the donation on their federal tax returns.

Carey Services will use NAP donations to help maintain the Pleasant Woods apartment complex.

For more information, call Carey Services at (765) 668-8961, and ask for April Scott, extension 111, or send her an email at ascott@careyservices.com.

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Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority

Carey Services
2724 S. Carey St., Marion, IN 46953
(765) 668-8961 / www.careyservices.com

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