

Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that public policies and practices should promote access to care for people with mental health conditions. NAMI opposes efforts to take Medicaid coverage away from people who don't meet a work requirement.

Why We Care:

Access to coverage and care is essential for people to successfully manage their mental health condition and get on a path of recovery. Medicaid is the lifeline for much of that care, paying for services that people need, such as medications, case management, therapy, peer supports and crisis and hospital care. Medicaid is the nation's largest payer of mental health and addiction services and provides health coverage to 27% of adults with a serious mental illness.

In January 2018, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) reversed longstanding Medicaid policy and began allowing states to request Medicaid demonstration waivers that condition Medicaid eligibility on an individual's work status. This means that if someone is unable to comply with work requirements, they can be cut off from essential health care coverage.

NAMI supports the goal of employment and recognizes that people with mental illness are disproportionately unemployed. However, work requirements in Medicaid don't advance the goal of employment for many people with mental illness. Instead, work requirements put people with mental health conditions at risk by creating barriers to maintaining health coverage.

NAMI opposes efforts to take Medicaid coverage away from people who don't meet a work requirement.

Rather than spending scarce public resources on imposing work requirements, NAMI urges states to invest in robust, evidence-based supported employment programs which help people with mental illness get and keep competitive employment.

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities