FACES

A Collection of Personal Stories from Medicare and Medicaid Recipients

MICHIGAN CITIZEN ACTION
ORGANIZING CHANGE. GETTING RESULTS.
Michigan Citizen Action would like to personally thank all of the individuals who committed their time and energy toward this project. To Michigan Citizens, we Thank You most for your willingness to share your lives with us in story.

We hope that this project will be used to celebrate success in health, community and meaningful change.
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Acknowledgements
Introduction

Michigan Citizen Action (MCA) is an organization that is committed to advocating multi-issue programs that reach both mainstream and marginalized populations. MCA has been reaching out to the citizens of Michigan regarding their personal use and opinions about Medicaid.

Medicaid, a federal health insurance system for individuals over the age of 65 and for certain younger persons with disability, has been a major area of concern for the people of Michigan and the country.

MCA has collected stories from those who were willing to speak out about the impact of Medicaid in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of each individual’s personal experience and invite public discourse regarding Medicare.

For more information, please contact or visit:

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5 years ago my wife had a heart attack and needed open heart surgery. **Something went wrong.**

She had a massive stroke during the surgery and now needs a lot of care and medication.

I retired early so that I could take care of her.

**Medicaid currently covers a lot of the expenses.**

If it weren't for Medicaid we would have lost our home long ago and she would be in a nursing home that would also have to be at the expense of the state. Our quality of life would be greatly diminished and cost to the state would be higher.
My mom fell and had to have a craniotomy, she was hospitalized for 6 weeks. My parents could not have afforded the cost of that hospital bill and surgery if it wasn't for Medicare. My mom also had to have 6 weeks of rehabilitation and Medicare paid for that while insurance would not.

I literally do not know what we would do without Medicare.

My dad worked at General Motors all of his life, and is retired now, but their insurance wouldn't have covered near the amount that Medicare covered.

Please keep Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid. Medicare is a life saver. I have been in the work force for 30 years and they want to take my Medicare away. I call that legal robbery.
I have received major help from the Medicare program over the past ten years. Hips replaced, back surgery and eye lens replacement in both eyes are the major events in my life.

I came to the USA having had full medical coverage in my former country. My former plan was better than Medicare but I am happy with the provided coverage. Don't mess with the program. I am willing to pay more tax for me and my family as well as other Americans that are in need.

This country was built on neighbor helping neighbor.
I have two sisters that rely on Medicare for their insurance needs. They have worked their entire lives and now one is faced with an aggressive small cell cancer that keeps recurring. She has two young daughters and is no longer able to work. Her spirit to survive is amazing, but without Medicare, she would most certainly be dead by now. Her treatment costs exceed $5000.00 per month.

The other sister has a degenerative spinal disease called Dystonia. She has worked her entire life to be permanently disabled with this most painful disease. The injections needed to slow the growth of this monstrous disease would cost her nearly $2000.00 per visit. Her pain is unbearable, but without the treatment covered by Medicare, she would not be alive today.
I have several chronic health problems for which Medicare helps pay for the management of: 1) Delusional disorder, 2) Diabetes, 3) Hypertension, 4) Chronic kidney disease with 60% kidney function, 5) Cardiac Arrhythmia, for which I have a heart pacemaker, 6) Severe sleep apnea, for which I have a CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) machine that I use every night and 7) Gastrointestinal esophageal reflux disease (GERD).

I work 21 hours per week at $10.30/hour. My apartment rent is $575.00 a month, my Blue Cross Blue Shield Medigap Plan costs me $122.86/month and my Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan costs me $94.80/month.

Although I do get Social Security Disability (SSD), without Medicare, I would not be able to pay for all the doctor visits (to both general practitioners and specialists) that are required to manage my complex of interactive health conditions, the necessary lab work and diagnostic tests such as X-rays, EEG's, EKG's, Ultrasounds and MRI's as well as my CPAP machine that helps prevent me from dying in my sleep and my pacemaker that helps keep my heart beating correctly so I don't pass out anymore. That doesn't even include my hospital visits!
My husband has had 3 heart attacks, a quadruple heart by-pass operation, and a pacer in the last 10 years.

The state worker won't put him on a Medicaid program that will cover his doctor visits or his medication.

I have a chronic condition, Carpal Tunnel and Tendonitis and Emphysema coupled by Sleep Apnea.

Medicare stopped paying for my medication in January 2012 and I have to pay for a pharmaceutical insurance policy in order to get my medication. With the policy I can only afford half of those. My medicine costs $212 and $274 dollars even with my plan. Those are necessary medicines which I cannot afford even with insurance. Our only income is disability Social Security and if that is stopped we will have no way to pay our bill and buy food.

This is our story.
She is 66 years old and in a wheel chair...

Three years ago she was in a facility called Tender Care. Due to her condition, she was not able to be at home even for a short period of time because she needed additional care.

Medicaid paid for her care.

Today she is able to be in her home with her husband because of Medicaid paying for a home health aide. This aid comes to her home three times a week to help her.

"If Medicaid is cut, we would have to make very tough decisions about whether to get our medication as prescribed by our doctor. If we got our medication then we would need to cut back on food and pay our rent late. Medicaid is essential to our life."
Facial Expression: “I am Grateful to be Alive.”

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I am a (6) year Breast Cancer Survivor.

I received a Mastectomy, Breast Reconstruction, Breast Reduction and a Tummy Tuck all because I receive Medicare and Medicaid.

I am grateful to be alive.
Facial Expression: These Systems Can be Fixed
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My husband was in a nursing home in Michigan for rehab.

We have insurance that covered 30 days.

His roommate of 87 years had been there for 3 years after being unable to walk and care for his self. He had one daughter who was unable to care for him. His home had to be sold along with his savings. After that his social security check and Medicare (perhaps Medicaid too) went directly to the nursing home for payment.

It was indeed sad watching him sort his meager personal items daily. It would have been tragic to send him out on the streets without even that. How many homeless people would we be talking about without Medicare and Medicaid?

These systems can be fixed.

Listen to those who know and care.
I could not make retirement without Medicare & Medicaid protection!
Wayne Fisk
MI15 - Dearborn Heights, Michigan

I'm about to retire at the end of October after 43 years of employment and will become a Medicare recipient. I don't want Medicare to go away at this point in my life!
Tecla Loup
MI07 - Tecumseh, Michigan

Without Medicare I would not have been able to afford the hospital and surgical treatment which saved my life. Had I somehow been able to pay for those services, my wife and I would barely exist in abject poverty.
Joe Feinstein
MI09 - West Bloomfield, Michigan