

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

New Threats to Medicaid: Action Needed

CALL NOW!

Senator Cory Booker: (973) 639-8700

and

Senator Robert Menendez: (973) 645-3030

Use our [sample script to call your Members of Congress NOW](#) and tell them:

- I am a member of The Arc.
- I am a person with I/DD (or a family member of someone with I/DD, or a professional in the disability field).
- I (or my family member) depend(s) on Medicaid long term supports (or home and community supports) to live in my/our community.
- Oppose cuts to Medicaid. Any cuts to Medicaid threaten the lives of people with disabilities.
- Oppose the Graham-Cassidy bill

This summer, advocates like you worked hard to defeat a dangerous health care bill that would have included massive cuts to Medicaid. We need your help to reinforce this message once again, as new proposals are being introduced that include similar threats.

Key Senators and the White House are working together to create a bill called the Graham-Cassidy plan (you can learn more about it [here](#)). This bill would block grant and make huge cuts to the Medicaid program, and end the Medicaid expansion and marketplace subsidies.

In short, it would be **devastating to people with disabilities** and their families and threaten access to community living.

Act now: Last month the Senate parliamentarian issued an opinion that the deadline for the current budget reconciliation process is September 30. This means fewer votes are needed to pass this bill until then, so take action NOW!

Thank you for your work to protect Medicaid!



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.

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 between political parties
Budget: The amount of money that is available for, required for, or assigned to a particular purpose.
Congressional District: 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.
Constituent: A resident of a legislator's district.
Fiscal Year (FY): An accounting period of 12 months. In New Jersey State government, it is 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 Appointment Commission and are equal in population.
Legislative Information and Bill Room (LIBR): A unit under the Director of Public Information of the Office of Legislative Services that supplies a variety of information about the Legislature to legislators and the public.

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute | 100 Longport Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 | 732.246.2025
<http://www.thearcnj.org/family-institute>

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Build a Relationship with Your Legislators

You are an expert! Every day you deal with issues in 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 legislators and their staff.**
 - If you haven't met them, set up a meeting or write a letter to introduce yourself. This is especially important if the legislator is newly elected and does 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.**
 - Sharing personal stories about your family's experiences related to the issue is a great way to put a human face to a problem, when talking about services or programs don't capture our audience interest.
3. **Don't be afraid to ask how they intend to vote on specific bills and why.**
 - If they do not intend to vote your way, continue to build your relationship and share information that may sway their opinion.
 - When legislators do support your problem, give them credit. Send them letters of thanks and share them with the editor of your local newspaper, current with their support publicly. This will help for them to feel appreciated the next time you ask for their help.
4. **Work with a legislator's staff.**
 - Staff members conduct research, draft bills, make recommendations on amendments, and develop expertise in areas in which their legislator is most active.
5. **Attend town council meetings, school board meetings, rallies, and other forums that are open to the public.**
 - This will give you the opportunity to meet key people involved in the issues, keep up to date on developments related to the issues, and voice your opinion.

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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 need case.

• I.e. My sister Samantha has a developmental disability. NOT My developmentally disabled sister 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 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

Commonly Used Legislative Lingo

How to Build a Relationship with your Legislators

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