

A scenic landscape of a river flowing through a deep canyon with steep, rocky walls. A large waterfall cascades over a series of rock formations in the middle distance. The sky is clear and blue. A white outline of the state of Idaho is superimposed over the image, framing the text and the landscape.

# Medicaid Stories

*Idaho*





# MEDICAID: Impacting the Lives of Idahoans with Disabilities - Northern Idaho Stories



*While I work full time to provide my family insurance, Medicaid, through the Katie Beckett Waiver, covers my son who is autistic. Without Medicaid, we would struggle to pay for what my primary insurance doesn't cover for the many therapies that are essential to his progress. My husband and I work full time, but even our good insurance would still leave us thousands of medical bills monthly.*

*Through the Katie Beckett waiver, he receives Medicaid for health insurance, which covers what our primary does not for ABA/Behavioral Intervention Services, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and medical and dental appointments. ~ Jennifer, Parent, Coeur d'Alene*

*Our children can receive much needed therapy and medical attention. Our oldest is autistic and the second has speech and sensory issues.  
~ Tiffany, Parent, Coeur d'Alene*



*Medicaid is important to me and my family because we need it to live. It provides the medical coverage we need to help with our prescriptions.  
~ Nate, Post Falls*

*Our daughter, Hannah, age 31, has cerebral palsy and autism. Hannah has received services from Idaho since shortly after adopting her at one year of age beginning with the Infant/Toddler program. Without Medicaid, Hannah was uninsurable. Medicaid services help Hannah hire people to help with dressing, eating, toileting/showering, accessing the community, etc. The individuals who work for Hannah for low wages benefit from Medicaid health insurance for the working poor. These working individuals are essential to our communities.*

*Hannah receives Medicaid Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities. Hannah also receives medical insurance through Medicare and Medicaid. Without Medicaid, my husband and I would have had a hard time working, saving money, and staying healthy if we did not have help with Hannah. Hannah would not have progressed in living without her parents. She would be isolated and depressed. ~ Nora, Parent, Moscow*





*Mike is 42 and has lived on his own for 15 years. Without access to Medicaid benefits, he couldn't live independently. Medicaid allows him the ability to afford ongoing medication as well as the ability to work, and not worry about paying bills or emergency health visits. His message to lawmakers is, "It would be a huge mistake to cut Medicaid benefits. It's not right for some people that the options are to be homeless or to be in jail if they can't afford their medical bills. Cutting our benefits is not the best way to save money. There are other ways for the government to save money. Doing this would be a huge mistake."*

*~Mike, Moscow*



*I volunteer at the Salvation Army and the Moscow Food Co-op. I also have a regular job. I am an Idahoan who values friendship, kindness, and community.*

*Without Medicaid, I couldn't work or volunteer in the community. Medicaid pays for my job coach and doctor's visits.*

*"I am a citizen of Idaho. I work hard and play hard, just like everyone else. Cutting Medicaid would hurt me and the people I care about. Don't leave me behind." ~Toby, Moscow*



*My 9-year-old has been a Medicaid recipient for five years. Despite having private insurance, prior to her Medicaid approval, we struggled to afford her complex medical needs. Medicaid has ensured that she is able to receive care from gastroenterology, endocrinology, nephrology, cardiology, psychiatry, and audiology specialists. We frequently have to travel to Boise or out of state (to Spokane, Seattle, and San Jose CA) for this care, as Idaho lacks pediatric specialty care.*

*The travel adds significantly to the time and financial cost for her essential and complex medical needs and it would be a significant burden without our Medicaid coverage. Additionally, we use our child's Medicaid coverage for behavioral, physical, speech, and occupational therapy services. These are essential for her to build skills that she needs to successfully navigate life in the community. Investing in these now will make her a more independent and capable citizen in the future, as she is building important life skills that are impaired by her disability. Finally, her Self-Direct budget through the Medicaid DD Program should allow our family to hire support staff to help her generalize those skills into community life. Unfortunately, the workforce shortage has made it difficult to identify, train, and retain these staff, which has led to my leaving the workforce to support her full time. We are hopeful that Idaho will do the right thing in strengthening, rather than weakening, this important service system, so that our family can live and thrive in Idaho for years to come.*

*~Jenna, Parent, Moscow*







My daughter Sophie has Williams Syndrome. She has no ability to discern that people can be bad, she has no stranger danger. Without community support from Medicaid, she would not be able to be in her happy place which is around people. She also would not get one on one support at school and would not be able to read, write, or interact safely with her fellow students.

~Laura, Parent, Moscow



Medicaid is important to me because it allows me to stay in my home with the supports necessary to do so. Medicaid also allows me to afford necessary medication, without which would negatively affect my quality of life.

Home and community-based services are much less expensive than congregate settings, such as institutions or nursing homes. Dangers to people with disabilities include communicable diseases, and unnecessarily driving up the cost of medical care.

I contribute to my community in several ways, raise a family, am a volunteer for youth, and have the right to self determination.

Medicaid allows me to do so.

~ Artice, Orifino

*I have two beautiful, sweet daughters with special needs and complex medical conditions. For years, Medicaid has been a lifeline, helping us afford the essential medical equipment, therapies, and doctor's appointments they require that our primary insurance couldn't cover. My husband is a hardworking full-time Corrections Officer, while I am a full-time caregiver for our girls. I don't get breaks—I am their constant support, ensuring they receive the care they need every single day.*



*Without Medicaid (Katie Beckett waiver), my daughters wouldn't be thriving as they are today. Both have rare genetic conditions along with multiple medical complexities. One of my daughters relies on critical medical devices to survive and remain at home with us. Medicaid has been instrumental in securing these life-saving tools and treatments. It also enabled us to diagnose their rare genetic condition, allowing us to better understand and manage their ongoing medical needs. Without Medicaid, our family would face unimaginable challenges in providing them with the care they deserve.*

~Jaime, Parent, Post Falls



*My husband and I are the proud parents of two sons with autism. Our oldest son has autism and recently received a diagnosis of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) as well. He requires intensive, high-level support daily. Our younger son is also on the autism spectrum and benefits from consistent, hands-on support at school and in the community.*



*Medicaid allows our children to receive the appropriate services and interventions that help them grow, thrive, and experience a better quality of life. It enables us to:*

- *Attend essential monthly medical check-ups and medication reviews*
- *Access providers and therapies that meet their unique developmental and behavioral needs*
- *Get help with dental care, which is extremely difficult for children with sensory processing challenges*
- *Work with educators and support staff who are trained to provide the hands-on care our boys need to succeed at school*
- *Maintain a level of support at home that keeps our family strong and functioning*

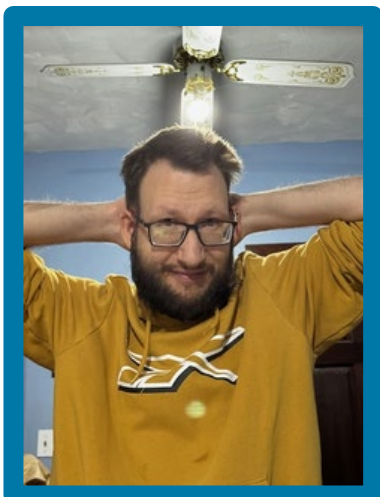
*Without Medicaid's Katie Beckett waiver, our ability to provide this care would be drastically compromised. The financial and emotional toll of losing this support would not only impact our family, but it could also push more families like ours toward crisis or institutionalization—outcomes that the waiver program was designed to prevent.*

*Please remember that families like ours are important when making funding decisions. We are not asking for special treatment—we are asking for the chance to give our children the same dignity, opportunity, and support every child deserves.*

*~ Cait, Parent, Hayden*

*Right now I'm worried about getting my teeth fixed, and getting false teeth is so expensive. I wish Medicaid covered more of this expense, and I wish more dentists who are here accepted Medicaid. It's hard to find providers.*

*~ Leann, Moscow*



*I like living where I am. I might like to live on my own one day, but I don't know how I can ever afford an apartment by myself with the cost of living and rent. I know my landlord keeps the cost of my house down for me and my roommates, and I look with my staff to see apartments for just me, but the rent is more than my income from Social Security. That's what I think about.*

*~ Matt, Moscow*





*If I didn't have my staff, I don't know where I would live. I can't be left on my own, I don't see things well. I need help with most of the things I do to keep me from falling, or so I don't hurt myself. I have two roommates, and I love them. They are my family friends. I don't want to live somewhere else where I don't have my things, people I know and a home where I know where things are and people who love me. I have to have my staff to be able to live in my own home.*

*~ Jenn, Moscow*



*Medicaid supports me in what is important to me, like shopping, going to see my friends, maybe Special Olympics, being able to have the food I like, and learning to help make that food. Important to me is living here with people who won't let anyone hurt me, who make sure I have food and clothes, and that no one takes things that are mine. I like to live in my own house. I know I can't do that without my staff, who are always with me, and my roommates. I don't have any family anymore, so who would help me if I didn't have these services?*

*~ Trudy, Moscow*

*I have a nurse who helps me, and I have people who help me live in my home. I like where I live, I like the people in this town, and I know a lot of people who know me. I know I can't live in a home like this without Jack and Morgan and people who take care of me. Morgan cooks me things I like because she is a good cook who loves me.*

*I worry about not being able to see my boyfriend if I have to move. I have lived in my home with my roommates for over 15 years. My house has things (grab bars, railings, a walk-in ADA shower) so I can always live here and be safe, and no one hurts me here because my staff won't let them.*

*~ Ramona, Moscow*



# Southwest Idaho Medicaid Stories



*I receive Medicaid Adult DD Self-direction waiver services and a Blue Cross special needs plan. Because of the services I get I have full control of my life and I can get therapy, great support, live independently, have a great social life, get massages, and yoga, and go to the gym, and be involved in advocacy it's also important because I have a great neighborhood due to low-income housing and choose the career that I want and still be financially abundant and be on many advocacy projects and graduate with near honors from college ~ Ian, Self-Advocate, Boise*

*Medicaid allows us to access care and treatments for both of my children with complex medical needs. We would not be able to afford treatments/specialty medications or access DD services. We are prescribed one medication in particular that costs 3x our monthly mortgage per month. We would be impoverished and forced to choose between living expenses and medical treatment.*

*~ Sydney, Parent, Boise*

*My son has a neurodevelopment genetic syndrome that causes him to be developmentally delayed and have intractable epilepsy. He also has IV nutrition that he relies on to live and be healthy. He has had brain surgery to help with his seizures and is constantly fighting infections. Without Medicaid, he would likely die as we would not be able to afford to care for him due to his medical costs.*

*~ Riali, Parent, Boise*



*My adult daughter who has significant medical and cognitive disabilities can live in her family home, in her neighborhood, and community, because of the Home and Community Based waiver funded through Medicaid. She continually amazes her medical team with how well she is doing, given her level of disability. She is also able to receive the medications and specialized medical care she needs because of Medicaid funding.*

*Without Medicaid's support, my daughter would have to be institutionalized or placed in a long-term care nursing facility, away from family and friends, with little choice in her daily activities and routines, and at risk of neglect from an overworked staff. All of her needs, although complex and unique, can be safely and efficiently met at home with proper training and oversight, and for less expense. ~ Lauri, Parent, Boise*





*My son's daily activities are centered on services provided by The Arc and it's dependent on Medicaid. There are few options for people like my son who is intellectually disabled. We cannot be without these services.*  
~ Sharon, Parent, Boise

*Without Medicaid, my son would not be able to receive the therapies and medication he so desperately needs each week. He was diagnosed with Autism just before he turned age three and we had been getting him help before even then but it wasn't enough. Going back to just private insurance with extremely high deductibles would mean we would have to stop his services. This would be catastrophic for him. At the age of 5, he was so depressed that he attempted suicide and we ended up in the ER. No one wanted to help us because they said he was "too young to be having such problems". It wasn't until he told the nurses that he wanted to die so that the pain would go away that people started taking it as seriously as it was. We were finally able to get him in to see specialists that we had been petitioning to see for months.*

*It turns out he has a rare genetic mutation that causes him extreme pain, but due to his Autism, he could not communicate this with us. It wasn't until we were able to see the specialists we needed and get the testing done that was required that we could get him started on the right medication, and all of this was possible because of Medicaid. Now he is a happy, healthy, and thriving little boy who no longer wants to die. However, it is only because he attends the therapies we do each week and he can take the medication that runs into the thousands for a 30-day supply that he is doing so well. If funding for Medicaid is cut and the program he is a part of (Katie Beckett waiver) goes away, it would be sentencing him to a life of pain that would likely end much too soon.* ~ Crystal, Parent, Boise



*Medicaid is important for my family because we have a member in our home who depends on Medicaid developmental disability services. Without Medicaid services, my family would not be able to cover my son's expenses and would not have the same quality of life.*  
~ Maria, Parent, Nampa

*It's the only health insurance that I can get. I'm on SSI so I can't afford any other health insurance. I need it for life saving medications.* ~ Abigail, Boise

*I am a single mom. I have a child with non-verbal level 3 autism. Medicaid helps pay for all his therapies and needed supplies such as diapers. It helps pay his hospital bills when he's sick.*

*Medicaid helps pay for my autistic child's therapies (Occupational, physical, speech, ABA) just everything he needs to make it in life! My child also has a weak immune system so he gets sick a lot. Medicaid helps pay for hospital bills! Please don't take it away!*  
~ Aknina, Parent, Caldwell



*Our foster daughter is now 20 years old. Sunshine came to us at age four with a difficult-to-control seizure disorder, cerebral palsy, and learning disabilities. Because of Sunshine's Medicaid coverage, she is alive today because Medicaid saved her life after her traumatic brain injury by covering her two craniotomies, blood transfusions, and hospital care. Medicaid provided rehabilitation services for years to teach her to walk, talk, and succeed as much as possible. To this day, Medicaid is still her lifeline. Her disability waiver funding and her life-giving anti-seizure medication, which has been provided by Medicaid all her life since she was an innocent victim of her own father. The story is simple: one wicked man severely injured his own child, two older citizens raised her to adulthood as their own, and Medicaid has always been a huge part of the equation, and is still allowing her to continue living a meaningful and healthy life to this day. Would anyone expect anything less from the government of the United States of America? Our country takes care of its own, pure and simple.*

*~ Carol, Foster Parent, Boise*



*Medicaid is important for the physical, mental and emotional and social survival of our adult daughter Eva who suffered a brain bleed shortly after her birth resulting in severe cerebral palsy. She requires 24/7 care for all of her daily needs due to the severity of her injury as she is unable to talk, is non-ambulatory and unable care for herself in any way. Yet she is very alert and aware and can communicate when choices are offered. She has a great sense of humor (lucky!), and fabulous presence and the best laugh ever! Eva brings everyone into the present moment with her mischievous joy.*

*Medicaid has allowed Eva to have the care providers she needs to survive and live a full, least restrictive life and share in community and bless others.*

*Medicaid is truly COMPASSION IN ACTION! We are so proud of Idahoans, and we are so grateful for this literally, life and family saving assistance. Otherwise, we would have long ago been crushed and bankrupted by the financial and physical burden. Eva's parents cared for her in their home for 21 years until mom required double hip replacement surgeries. Parents worked full & part time while caring for Eva. She is now 38. Eva is a treasure. Eva is happy. She knows she is valuable and that she is loved.*

*~ Ned, Parent, Boise*

*Without Medicaid, we would not be able to afford to pay for the therapies my son requires. Vital therapies. To learn to talk and do basic functions.*

*~ Ammie, Parent, Meridian*





*By having Medicaid, it allows me to give my son the best life he can, because I have the financial support. It gives him all the support that he desperately needs to become a functioning member of society. He was mostly nonverbal until 4 years old, SLP helped with that. His fine motor skills would be nonexistent if it wasn't for OT. He would still be cross-eyed if it wasn't for ophthalmology. He had heart surgery at 9 months old, and Medicaid paid for that bill. We would have been ruined for the rest of our lives had we had that. Some people desperately need it to help give their child the best life. They didn't ask to come to this earth with differing needs than a typical child. But we can help them have a life that helps them and Medicaid is a huge part of that help.*

*~ Brecca, Parent, Kuna*



*Medicaid allows our son to access medical care and equipment to keep him not only happy and engaged in his community but alive. When our son was 12 we discovered he has a super rare (less than 300 in the world) degenerative condition and not cerebral palsy like we were told when he was 2. He lost his ability to walk and was losing his ability to sit and talk. He developed a dangerously fast-progressing form of scoliosis. Just last year several kids with the same condition died of complications from scoliosis and breathing problems. He was fit for several back braces until he was big enough for spinal fusion, as well as a feeding tube because he was losing weight and becoming emaciated from his condition. His surgery was successful and he thrived after.*



*Without support from Medicaid, we would have had to decide on which care he could receive and be left with a 6 figure medical bill. He also requires a power wheelchair, leg braces, a Hoyer lift, weekly physical therapy, etc. The list is extensive. Our family would not be able to afford all of these items he needs, even though we are above the poverty level to qualify for Medicaid. He would go without the lifesaving care he has been able to receive. His life quite literally relies on the Medicaid waiver he gets through the Katie Beckett plan.*

*~ Tara, Parent, Meridian*

*We can provide the necessary care for my family. I have debilitating migraines I receive care for and have special needs children. Without Medicaid, My special needs kiddos would not be able to receive the therapies they need.*

*~ Stacie, Parent, Meridian*



*Our son Michael, 22, has an intellectual and developmental disability since early childhood. He gains (and we pray will continue to gain) vital physical and emotional improvement through the medical, therapy, and personal support services that Medicaid helps pay for. With Michael's major impairments in mobility, understanding, and communication, caring for him in our home is a challenging, full-time, around-the-clock job that we shoulder as parents. The services Medicaid helps pay for--exams and medications from doctors, specialized therapies, and support care--bring critical professional knowledge, medicines, and exercise/practice techniques that vastly improve his daily life and prospects ahead.*

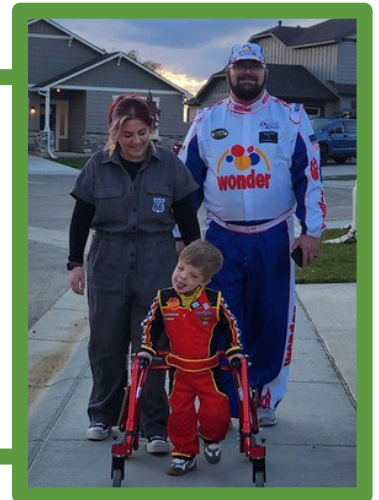
*Without Medicaid assistance to Michael, our family finances would be further drained to pay for the medical care that requires many specialists because of his extremely rare and poorly understood genetic disorder. The Medicaid funds enabled key therapies, equipment, and other classroom supports for Michael during his 17 years in the West Ada school system, which he aged out of at 21. Now and moving forward, he will be reliant on both the benefits for his care needs as well as the community programs that support the disabled population and keep them from isolation.*

*~ Ken, Parent, Meridian*

*Medicaid allows me to provide a better life for my son that I otherwise wouldn't be able to give. He's able to attend therapies that give him a much better quality of life and see specialists that otherwise wouldn't be available to us. This program has allowed him to grow in his skills and confidence.*

*Without Medicaid, my son would not be able to attend the therapies he so desperately needs or provide him with the medical equipment he uses to enjoy his childhood.*

*~ Cassie, Parent, Nampa*



*My boys rely on disability Medicaid for all the things that are helping them progress in so many areas of their lives! Occupational therapy, speech, alternative therapies! These are all making a huge positive impact on their lives. My boys have autism, ADHD, epilepsy, and bipolar disorder. They have many, many doctors and doctors appointments Medicaid is integral in this process. Also, family-paid personal care services is under Medicaid and under attack as well. This program has been huge for our family and raising our kids. It's provided a way for us to make income which without it would be impossible. With the level of care our kids need I could never get a regular job and our kids wouldn't get the necessary care. Medicaid is essential and the programs in Medicaid are essential!*

*~ Amanda, Parent, Middleton*





*Medicaid provides unique services that allow our son to reside in his own home with support. Living in the community with those who love him is the best situation for him, and it would not be an option without enhanced Idaho Medicaid services.*

*Without Medicaid, I would not be able to work! Either one of the parents in our home would have to forgo working so we could be an unpaid caregiver for our son full-time. That is a loss of taxes for the state of Idaho. In addition, his two caregivers would not be employed, again a loss of a tax base for the state of Idaho.*

*~ Toni, Parent, Nampa*



*I have two autistic daughters who have several other diagnoses as well. My husband works hard, over 50 hours a week, but we still cannot afford health care through his work. It is a choice of housing/food/electricity or health care.*

*Without Medicaid, we could not get the medical care my children need. The medications that are needed to keep them physically and mentally healthy. The therapies they need to help them physically/mentally be able to be a healthy contributing member of society. They would not have the personal care that they need on a daily basis. In short, they would not have the basic care that everyone takes for granted and would have to be put in an institution to receive that level of care, and without Medicaid, they wouldn't receive that either. If they take away my daughters' Medicaid, they get no medical coverage, no prescription coverage, no dental coverage, and even more detrimental, no therapies and no interventions.*

*~ JoAnne, Parent, Caldwell*



*I self-direct my services. This means that I receive a Medicaid budget that is determined through a state assessment process every year. I use that budget to recruit, hire, and manage a certain number of community support workers who provide round the clock support to me. This includes assisting me to get out of bed in the morning, showering, using the restroom, helping me to get dressed, preparing meals, driving me to appointments, and helping me get my grocery shopping done. My community support workers do all of these things at a fraction of the cost it would be for me to receive these same services in a nursing home.*

*While I am considered nursing home level of care and COULD live in a nursing home based on my needs, I will NEVER make this choice because I refuse to live in an institution. I want a life, and that is not possible in a nursing home. People go there to die.*

*~ Kristyn Herbert, Meridian*



*Medicaid provides medical coverage for twin boys who have Down syndrome and several medical conditions. As small business owners, we do not have access to affordable, quality health insurance so Medicaid coverage allows us to access the health care they need to live a healthy life.*

*Without Medicaid, we would not be able to afford to pay for vital therapies that have helped our boys grow and develop to their fullest potential. Physical, occupational and speech therapy have enabled them to progress in their development which will improve their ability to live a more healthy, independent life as they grow older.*

*~ Julie, Parent, Nampa*



*It allows us to access much needed supports for my boys. They have complex needs and their education and friendships and our family is able to work when they are supported.*

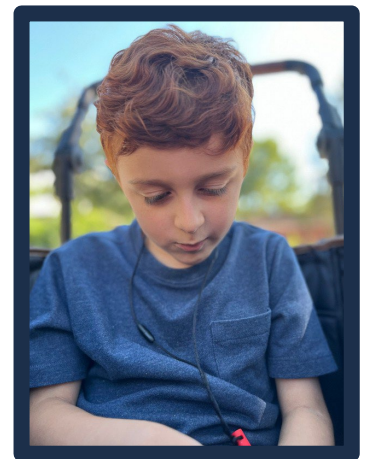
*Access counseling, occupational therapy, respite care, behavior intervention support, and case management through health and welfare. I would also have a hard time working as the services help teach my kiddos much needed life skills and help keep them regulated and able to be in school.*

*~ Adriane, Parent, Nampa*

*We are over the income limit, but my son receives Medicaid with the Katie Beckett waiver. He is 7 and has severe autism and is nonverbal. He receives 6 therapies a week and has to have pullups prescribed to him, all covered by Medicaid. Without it, it would be nearly \$2000 a month. He needs these therapies to learn how to be safe in this world.*

*Without Medicaid, we would struggle to pay for therapy through commercial insurance. Even more I'm advocating for those families that do not have a primary insurance to fall back on, either from lack of availability or because it's insanely expensive.*

*~ Alicia, Parent, Fruitland*



*I have two adult children with autism. Medicaid covers DD services that keep my youngest son safe and alive. Medicaid covers DD services and mental health services that help keep my middle son and our family safe.*

*~ Michelle, Parent, Weiser*







*Our daughter is medically complex and also has autism. Her primary insurance paid for her transplant, but because we have Medicaid, the deductible was written off. Medicaid also helps pay for our transport to and from her transplant hospital. My daughter also attends OT, speech, and PT. Her private insurance only pays for 20 visits a year and is subject to her deductible. We'd never be able to afford therapies without Medicaid. Medicaid is helping my daughter live her best life.*

*~Christie, Parent, Kuna*



*The Medicaid services our son receives allow our family to function in a manner that allows all of us to be contributing citizens to our community.*

*His services provide support for him to work, access the community, and enjoy the things afforded to other people his age.*

*Without the services Medicaid provides, either my wife or I would have to support our son and would be unable to work and support ourselves and our other children.*

*~ Paul, Parent, Nampa*

*My daughter has Epilepsy. Medicaid has helped me cover everything she needs between her 5 medications she is on, therapies, Dr appt. I'm a single mom. This helps my daughter live and for me to do everything for her.*

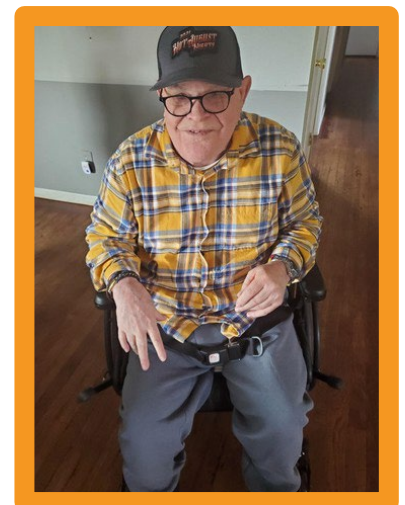
*~ Morgan, Parent, Nampa*

*Brad was born with a severe seizure disorder and has struggled his entire life. He was put into the Nevada State Hospital when he turned 14.*

*As an adult, Brad was finally able to move into a group home in Reno. It was better than an institution, but still not an ideal life. After many moves to many group homes over the years, we decided to move him to Idaho, where my husband and I live. The closest available was in Twin Falls.*

*He is now living a full life at the age of 76. He makes all his own choices. He chooses his meals and decides when to eat them. He has excellent health care. We have NEVER seen Brad this happy. He has a cute sense of humor, which showed itself when he moved to Idaho. We want Brad to remain in this situation for the rest of his life.*

*~ Nancy, Family Member, Eagle*





*28 years ago, my son was born with a complex birth defect, and has had numerous surgeries and hospitalizations because of it. Our family's insurance hit its lifetime max when he was a young child, and Medicaid covered his expenses in the middle of a long hospital stay with multiple surgeries, without which he would have become paralyzed. Today, he can hike, volunteer, explore our world, and participate in the community, gaining independence as much as he can because Medicaid provides for his health care and medical needs, and supports so that he can be as healthy as his various diagnoses will allow.*

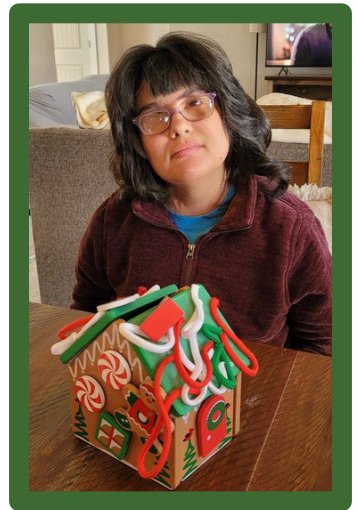
*Without Medicaid, my son would not be able to participate in the community as he requires supports to aid in managing his health. His volunteer work depends on having someone there to assist, and while he is far more knowledgeable than the assistant, he still needs to take breaks at times due to his physical health issues. My son would not be able to have the counseling he needs, nor the essential life-supporting medication needed due to his various diagnoses, and in fact would likely not survive without Medicaid. Our community would lose so much without him in it.*

*~ Heidi, Parent, Meridian*

*My daughter is on Medicaid. Without the assistance, I would not know what to do. I am not working because I am her primary care provider.*

*Without Medicaid, we would not receive much-needed assistance. We were just approved for the Self-Direct program under Medicaid. I was barely able to find a CSW. This was to eliminate the stress my daughter was under. Unfortunately, our CSW was on the Medicaid program and was recently cut. Now she must find a job that includes medical insurance. Which now leaves us back to square one. I was supposed to go back to work. Now I cannot. Nor can I pay into the system for when I retire. I am at a loss of what to do.*

*~ Debbie, Parent, Meridian*



*My daughters require 24-hour per day care.*

*Without Medicaid, my husband or I would not be able to work. We have to save enough money for our retirement and to provide for them for the rest of their lives.*

*~ Katie, Parent, Boise*





*I have two sons with Autism. One is currently on Katie Beckett, and the other just got diagnosed so we are in the process of getting him on Katie Beckett. They both have multiple therapies a week. They need therapies for speech, anxiety, OT, and community. Medicaid has also helped provide so many goods and services, like swim lessons for safety and therapy items for our house, which makes day-to-day life easier for them.*

*Without Katie Beckett, we have to pay \$250 a week in copays. We wouldn't be able to afford all the therapies even with our traditional insurance, and we would have to cut the therapies that they need.*

*~ Sarah, Parent, Boise*



*Our seven-year-old son was born extremely premature due to unforeseen circumstances. Due to his birth circumstances, he has continued to experience ongoing health concerns such as chronic lung conditions and developmental delays. He has had access to the Katie Beckett Waiver, which we use as a secondary insurance that covers needs that our primary insurance does not and will not cover. It allows us to keep him out of the hospital when he is ill by paying for things like home oxygen. Because of Medicaid, we can help care for him at home with family. He can continue to access his therapies to continue to gain the strength and skills he needs.*

*Without Medicaid, we couldn't continue to work on his skills and strength, or pay our bills. Without the secondary Medicaid, we would be subject to out-of-pocket maximums and copays that, even with a PPO plan, are the cost of a midrange car, EVERY YEAR. He would be limited in therapy sessions not by progress but by insurance limits. We would not have the freedom to choose jobs that would be better for our family because of needing to keep the most expensive options for PPO.*

*~ Emily, Parent, Boise*



*My son was diagnosed at the age of 2 with a rare genetic mutation that causes epilepsy, intellectual disability, ASD, anxiety disorder, FTT and sleep disturbance. Medicaid is supplemental to my primary insurance and allows us the ability to not have to pay to see his 5 specialists, all of his therapies, and all of his additional items he needs daily due to his feeding difficulties and sensory processing difficulties. It allows us access to needed therapies that provide us parents with relief from the daily struggles of his intense behaviors. It provides my son with the opportunity to have access to the care that he needs without us having to limit therapies and doctors based on our financial capacity. It is our lifeline to be as normal a life as we can have for us and our children raising a child with complex medical and behavioral needs that impact all of our daily life.*

*Without Medicaid, we would have to pick and choose what we could afford for our child based on cost. It would limit his access to therapies, PCS services and respite care for our mental health as parents are struggling to raise child with complex medical and behavioral needs.*

*~ Erin, Parent, Meridian*







*We have two boys, one has Down Syndrome and the other is level 3 autistic. Medicaid is essential for them to be able to live in this world that is not built for them.*

*Without Medicaid, we would not be able to provide the vital therapy and medical care to our boys.*

*~Angela, Parent, Nampa*



*We need the very vital and necessary services that Medicaid provides for Daniel.*

*Without Medicaid, we would not be able to afford the therapy services and the so many different appointments for all the medical issues that come with Daniel's diagnosis. We absolutely could not afford the support in our home and in the community to help with independent living and life skills.*

*~Jennifer, Parent, Boise*

*My daughter has Down Syndrome and Autism. She goes to a center every day, paid by Medicaid, so I can work. I'm a single Mom. It also covers her incontinence supplies. When she is at the center, they are working with her to improve and develop her skills. She loves going there. They have made tremendous progress with her. She's able to get the services that are provided.*

*~ Amy, Parent, Garden City*

*My daughter Ruby was born at 36 weeks and spent the second day of her life in surgery due to a Imperforate anus. After the wonderful team of doctors helped fix her up, she unfortunately had to spend the next month of her life in a hospital in the prone position. While not ideal but with the help of amazing health care workers, she was able to thrive and come home happy and healthy. While we were in the hospital, we received the unexpected news that she had a genetic condition called Trisomy 21, also known as Down Syndrome. As anyone who has had the joy of being around someone with Down syndrome knows, it is an extraordinary gift. However, it does come with many medical challenges. Low tone, smaller nose and ear canals, floppy airways, heart conditions, speech impairments, and hearing loss, to name a few. However, with early intervention, therapy, and good medical care, most of these challenges can improve and have helped people like my daughter, Ruby.*

*Without Medicaid, my daughter, most importantly be able to be part of a community like the rest of our peers.*



~ *Shavonne, Parent, Boise*



*Medicaid allows me to be able to be free and to have the ability to work and contribute to society. If I didn't have it, I would still be living with my parents in my 30s.*

*Without Medicaid, I would need to be under constant supervision by my parents due to my epilepsy. My parents and other family members would not be able to go to dinner with or without the fear that I might have a seizure at any moment. It's a nerve-wracking experience for everyone involved.*

*~ Andrew, Caldwell*



*My son with Down Syndrome currently resides in his community in Boise, rides his bike to his job in a kitchen at Boise State University, and has 2 caregivers who assist him in his home. He is doing so well because of the skills he learned while in inclusion programs that placed him alongside peers in his classrooms during his school years. He also had specialized help outside of the regular classroom to develop his skills to live independently. His transition program, ages 18 to 21, helped him learn how to cook, clean, and get along with roommates.*

*Our son would not be able to live independently without the Medicaid-funded Home and Community-Based (HCBS) program. The HCBS program is funded by federal Medicaid funds. If the Federal share of this program is reduced, the State of Idaho will need to come up with more funds, and Idaho can barely fund this program at its current levels. The impact would be significant on our family if we were our son's only caregivers. We are in our 70s, and we need support with our son as we age and our son's health declines with age.*

*~ Marilyn, Parent, Boise*



*Medicaid has provided the coverage my daughter has needed for therapeutic interventions, hospital stays, surgeries, and support staff to help her live the life she chooses to live. She was born with an ultra-rare genetic disorder that came with a lot of "she will never....." statements and beliefs. Medicaid has made it possible for her to show that "she can and she will."*

*Without Medicaid, my daughter would not do all the things that Medicaid supports - walking, communicating, making choices, and living in her own home. Private insurance did not cover most of her needs. Our family would not be where we are today. And, she would not be living in her own home and being active in the community. Medicaid has kept her healthy, growing, and thriving.*

*~ Angela, Parent, Boise*



# Southcentral, Southeastern, and Eastern Idaho Medicaid Stories

*Medicaid is the lifeline for my adult sister's care. My sister has an intellectual/developmental disability and autism. She has medical and mental health challenges, and she desperately needs Medicaid services and supports for her survival. My sister is on the DD Waiver Self Direction Program which provides her personal care and living supports and services. Medicaid also covers her medical and mental health expenses, therapies, medications, incontinence supplies, and some coverage for non-medical transportation costs.*

*Without Medicaid we would not be able to provide my sister's medical and mental health care, DD/ID/Autism services, and living supports for her to survive.*

*~ Regina, Family Member, King Hill*

*As a farmer, I finally have healthcare. Without Medicaid, I would not be able to go to the doctor or hospital.*  
*Devin, Paul*



*Medicaid helps and allows us to live on our own and be independent. Without Medicaid, I wouldn't be able to live on my own.*

*~ Robert, Pocatello*

*Medicaid helps provide services for my son to have a part time job, participate in his community and live a healthy life. My son would not be able to participate in the community or reach his full potential.*

*~ Addie, Parent, Twin Falls*



*Without Medicaid, I would die a very painful death. You might be thinking I am exaggerating, but I am not. I have multiple serious health issues, including diabetes and lupus. My medications alone cost over \$10,000 a month and I have a fixed income of under \$1,000. Without Medicaid, I could not afford my medication not to mention multiple doctors.*

*~ Tabitha, Gooding*

*I have a family that has needed Medicaid due to serious medical conditions and disability. Medicaid has not only saved the lives of family members, but has helped us weather through unspeakable health challenges. My family would not be as healthy physically and mentally without prevention and intervention that Medicaid has covered. We would not be able to get to medical specialists with the expertise in our rare diagnoses.*

*My daughter who is a wheelchair user would not be able to transfer herself and be as independent without the therapies needs to do so through medical interventions. She would not have support care workers that she needs to thrive and continue to strengthen and develop her talents and independence so that she can someday work and participate in her community. She would not have home and community based services.*

*~ Emily, Parent, Kimberly*



*Medicaid is important to me because it allows me to get Services like mental health counseling, doctor's appointments, and food stamps. I am not on my parent's insurance anymore, so Medicaid is the only option I have at the moment for insurance.*

*Without Medicaid, I wouldn't be able to access things like mental health counseling, doctor's appointments, dental appointments, etc.*

*~ Faith, Idaho Falls*

*I have two children ages 2 and 4 who have been diagnosed with autism. Since receiving their diagnosis my husband and I had decided that we would work together to do everything we could to get them the support that they need. They have made so much progress in the time that they have been able to access service and if it weren't for Medicaid I'm not sure that we would be able to get them the support they need.*

*My two children would not be able to access speech therapy, occupational therapy, and ABA therapy. My 4-year-old daughter went from being nonverbal to now saying a few words and communicating with her AAC device.*

*~ Magdalena, Parent, Shelley*



*Our 10 month old has Spina Bifida and hydrocephalus with having these conditions she goes to the doctor a lot and needs medical attention often. She has a VP Shunt placed in her skull that drains fluid off her brain, with having this surgery can be spur of the moment*

*And the expensive of the shunt it's self plus the surgery amount we would never be able to pay for her hospital stays without Medicaid. We do our part and have private insurance as her first one and Medicaid as her secondary. I feel we have done our duties as her parents we just need that extra help with medical expenses. We are very thankful to have it and know we are very lucky.*



*We wouldn't be able to get the services my daughter needs without out Medicaid. We would have to be very careful on when and how often we took her to the doctor. Her surgery's are life saving surgery's when her shunt is not functioning properly so we would have no choice to just do them and try to pay the medical bills as they come. It would hurt is financially more than I can imagine.*

*~ Kortnee, Parent, Idaho Falls*

*My son has Katie Beckett Medicaid due to developmental disabilities. He goes to Occupational Therapy, Feeding Therapy, and Physical Therapy every week. Many of these are not covered by my private insurance, or they will only cover 6 months' worth of therapies. My son's needs will last several years.*

*We would not be able to pay for my son to get the therapies he desperately needs. Out of pocket, we would be paying almost \$2000 a month to get him the help he needs.*

*~ Emily, Parent, Rexburg*



*My son has severe behavior issues and mental health problems. Without Medicaid, we could not afford the meds he needs to stay calm or the therapy he needs to learn how to get better. He would be in juvie at this point without these therapies and he is only 12.*

*~ Brittony, Parent, Ashton*

*My daughter was born 13 weeks premature. She has cerebral palsy, and her medical expenses are through the roof. Without Medicaid, we wouldn't be able to pay the \$7,000 a month her feeding supplies costs, or the \$2500-\$5,000 it costs for a wheelchair. Medicaid and wavered services help us pay for someone to help watch our daughter as well. They help pay for the therapies that have helped her grow and progress so much. We were told she would never walk, or communicate, and thanks to Medicaid covered services, along with hard work and determination she is working with a gait trainer, she can play piano by ear, and she can hum just about any song you ask. She has also been able to trial speech devices which have changed her life, and ours.*

*Medicaid also helps my son who has Autism and ADHD. It not only helps pay for the medication he needs right now, but it also helps pay for skills building and other therapies that we are utilizing so he may not have to use those medications forever. Thanks to Medicaid, we can afford to help my son control his emotional outbursts and teach him effective coping mechanisms for the future.*

*~ Heather, Parent, Rexburg*





*Medicaid pays my Medicare premiums and also pays for services Medicare does not cover.*

*Without Medicaid, I would not be able to afford my Medicare premium and due to my inconsistent but low income, I wouldn't qualify for Medicaid for low-income Idahoans. I would be without healthcare while continuing to have complex health needs due to a disability acquired at the age of 23.*

*~ Tara, Twin Falls*



*I am someone with autism and it helps me with my doctor and appointments, counseling, it helps my staff and how I can live. I would not be able to live on my own or afford the help that I have.*

*~ Erica, Twin Falls*

*I want to keep living in my Reshab home. I like it there, I like my staff, and I like them helping me with things.*

*Without Medicaid, I would not be able to keep my job without staff helping me. I would not be able to stay in my home and have staff help me with things. I would not be able to go out to stores or even keep my job that I have worked at for 10 years.*

*~ Billy, Twin Falls*



*I am a 44-year-old man with Down Syndrome, chronic lung failure and type 1 diabetes. I live in Twin Falls, ID in a Medicaid supportive Residential Habilitation home. This program provides me with a wonderful and productive life. I live in a home with other adults with disabilities that are like family to me. The staff are outstanding! They assist with all the medications and activities of daily living and drive me to my doctor's appointments.*

*Without Medicaid, I would not be able to sustain my home, medication, and medical care. This would have detrimental consequences on my livelihood. Please consider disability population that requires these Medicaid programs*

*to live and thrive in their communities. This not only helps the disabled population, but they give back to their communities by working, supporting the economy, loving the stranger, sharing their God given gifts to the communities they serve, like art, music, and educating the general public that life is good and to be grateful for who you are. Our lives are a delicate balance of fortitude in the balance of justice, and liberty for all peoples.*

*~Matthew, Twin Falls*



*Medicaid is important to my family. Without Medicaid to cover the bills for my daughter's speech therapy she received as well as a psychological evaluation, she wouldn't have been able to be placed into developmental preschool so she can have speech therapy as well as other learning activities with teachers who specialize in teaching kids with developmental delays as well as disabilities.*

*~ Cassie, Parent, Twin Falls*



*In 1989, our son, Eric, was in a severe motor vehicle accident when he was almost 18, just as he was about to graduate from high school. His injuries were extensive and included a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI), which resulted in him being in a hospital and then a coma rehab unit for almost a year. In that year, he used his one million dollar insurance policy and required application and approval for Medicaid.*

*When he had progressed to a more stable condition, we were able to bring him home and care for him in our home. He continued to live with us for over 25 years until he fell again and broke a hip, requiring rehab and care from a skilled nursing home again. The nursing facility agreed after the rehab that it was not an appropriate placement for him.*

*Thank goodness we were able to get Eric Home and Community Based Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental disabilities. It has been a program that has helped him be the happiest he has been able to be since the accident.*  
*~ Susan, Parent, Castleford*

*My son is non-verbal, has seizures, and needs 24-hour care. It would be physically and emotionally difficult for me to be able to take care of him at home. I had him at home until he was 26 years old, at which time I went through breast cancer and realized that he needed to be where he could be taken care of if anything happened to me. Luckily, I am still here. That was 17 years ago. But the reality is neither of us is getting any younger. His doctors at Primary Children's Hospital had started suggesting he should live in a group home when he was 19. That wasn't going to happen in my heart. But life changes. He has adapted well, and he likes his home and his staff. He comes home on the weekends, and we have our time together. It's not okay for him to lose the home that he has known for the past 17 years.*

*I could get political, but I won't. He deserves to have what he has; this is his life!*

*~ Leslie, Parent, Twin Falls*





*Tom is developmentally disabled with partial paralysis. He is unable to transfer and requires full-time care and assistance, and lives in a group independent living home. Tom receives Medicaid services for all his care, living expenses, and medical bills*

*Without Medicaid, our family would not be able to physically care for Tom.*

*~ Carolyn, Family Member, Twin Falls*

*My brother Skipper was born with a brain injury. In 2000, he moved to Idaho to be near his siblings. He lived in assisted living until about 7 years ago, at which time he had a brain hemorrhage and moved to a nursing home in Ashton. He is a vibrant, cheery person who is enjoyed by the staff and our community. He loves to be helpful.*

*When both parents had died, I returned to Driggs. While I have worked a dozen jobs in the last ten years, none of them were enough to cover my expenses. A few years ago, I applied for health insurance and was informed that I did not have sufficient income, so I had to accept a Medicaid plan to supplement my Medicare. In the past year, I qualified for Idaho Smiles and had one tooth saved and one removed. I have arthritis, which is increasingly tough on my shoulders, and I had a total knee replacement. I work part-time and have started a job at a local church. I volunteer at many non-profits and help friends and neighbors as needed.*

*I am worried sick about my brother losing his place in the nursing home as money becomes tighter for them. The only option would be for him to come live with me, and I can no longer lift him. He cannot be alone, so I would have to give up my job to take care of him, which is not physically possible.*

*~ Ginny, Driggs*



*I am recently widowed and have one child with ASD and another with ADHD. My child on the spectrum receives services paid through the Katie Beckett program. I am also a substitute teacher for IESDB, so we wouldn't have medical coverage otherwise.*

*Without Medicaid, my child with ASD wouldn't receive all of his necessary therapies and services, we couldn't afford my other child's ADHD medication, and I wouldn't be able to receive medical care so that I can stay healthy and care for my children in the years to come.*

*~ Kristina, Parent, Gooding*







*Medicaid plays an important role in our family and for our two youngest children and their needs. Our 16-year-old son has ODD, ADHD, and an intellectual disability. Our daughter, 11, was born with Down syndrome. Medicaid allows them access to mental health therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and job coaching. These therapies are essential to provide support so that they can become contributing members to society. Medicaid has allowed our children access to supports at school, in the community, and in our home so that our children can be safe and participate in activities that others can do naturally.*



*Without Medicaid, our family would not be able to participate in many daily activities, as our children require additional support. Without all the therapies and supports, our children would not be as successful as they are in school and in the community. Medicaid also allows time for respite for my husband and me. Raising a child is difficult, and then when you add the extra stress of a disability, caregivers are often running on an empty tank.*

*~ Rochelle, Parent, Rigby*



*I am a person with a disability. Medicaid is important to me so I can live in my own home, get the medications and mental health services I need. Without Medicaid, I would not be able to have in-home care.*

*~ Shiloh, Pocatello*

*Medicaid is our lifeline, our beacon of hope. Our beautiful daughter's autism, non-verbal struggles, and developmental delays require specialized care that's financially crippling. The PTEN mutation diagnosis added another layer of complexity. Idaho Medicaid steps in where employer insurance falls short, covering vital gene diagnosis, neurology, and hormone replacement therapy.*

*Without Medicaid, we'd drown in medical bills, sacrificing our daughter's future. Instead, we can focus on her well-being, not financial burdens. Every penny saved secures her tomorrow. Medicaid empowers us to fight for her health, her happiness, and her independence. It's more than insurance – it's our daughter's chance at a full life. Medicaid bridges this gap, allowing us to prioritize her well-being and secure a brighter tomorrow. Its support gives us hope, strength, and peace of mind, ensuring our daughter receives the care she deserves to thrive.*

*~ Saroop, Parent, Idaho Falls*





*Medicaid is my lifeline. It's what allows me to be an aunt, daughter, and friend. It's what keeps me safe and alive. I have a brain tumor, a spinal tumor, 1000s of tumors on my skin. I'm in constant pain that requires bed rest. I also struggle with various other disorders. I need consistent specialty healthcare. I will die without Medicaid.*

*~ Nicole, Ammon*

*I have Down Syndrome and use services so I can work and participate in my community. I get to choose where I live, rather than being forced to live in an institution.*

*Without Medicaid, I would not be able to participate in my community life. I would not have choices for where I live or how I live my life.*

*~Jay, Twin Falls*

*Medicaid is important to my family because my mom has been disabled her entire life.*

*Without Medicaid, I would not be able to provide full-time care for my mom. I would have to resume working full time, which would leave my mom alone at home for 50+ hours a week which would create an unsafe environment for her as she needs help with her meals, her meds, and ensuring that she doesn't forget where she is/where she's placing things.*

*~ Sarah, Family Member, Idaho Falls*

*In 2008, just before my 13th birthday, I had a double lung transplant. It saved my life and is the reason why I'll get to celebrate my 30th birthday this spring. In 2021, I lost my health coverage from my parents' health insurance because I turned 26, and while I had to jump through loopholes, I was eventually approved for Medicaid. I cannot begin to express how invaluable the Medicaid Expansion Program has been for me these last few years. Not just with my routine appointments seeing my specialists, but also getting exams or treatments I need as part of my long-term healthcare routine.*

*Additionally, without Medicaid, I would not be able to afford my life-saving medication. As an organ-transplant recipient, I have to take anti-rejection pills every 12 hours. Out of pocket, these can cost thousands of dollars. Unfortunately, I cannot afford the marketplace health insurance in Idaho, and quite frankly, when I applied, they flat-out rejected me on the basis of my finances. I work part-time at a job I love, a job I'm good at. I have an active social life, I'm an artist, and I always strive to be a positive influence in the spaces I occupy. I'm a human who was given a second chance to live, and I deserve to continue living. I deserve access to my vital medicines, doctors, and care. I did not ask for chronic health issues. Medicaid saves my life every single day, and I'm eternally grateful for the impact it has on me and everyone else in my community who continues to survive and thrive.*

*~ Reagan, Ammon*

*Without Medicaid, I would lose access to my specialist for my Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy and my Orthopedic needs. These specialists are at the University of Utah, and I could not afford to see them without Medicaid. Medicaid also helps me with my co-pays. I am classified as a Qualified Medicare Beneficiary. Meaning that Medicaid also helps me with getting my prescription at no cost, and I have no Medicare premium.*

*I would not be able to have a safe living environment if it were not for my Direct Care Worker, who keeps my house clean. I would not be able to take a bath without my Direct Care Worker. Medical Equipment, such as my Wheelchair and lift, would not be possible without Medicaid.*

*~ Denise, Ammon*



# MEDICAID: Impacting the Lives of Idahoans with Disabilities

*I have 4 children on the yes program. My oldest Has ADHD as well as PTSD, she currently is on medication and goes to therapy once per week to work through her trauma using EMDR.*

*My second oldest has autism, ADHD, anxiety and PTSD. She is on medication and receives therapy 2 times per week, goes to group therapy once per week and receives weekly CBRS services to help her practice skills in the community.*

*My youngest 2 boys have autism, ADHD, anxiety, and depression. Both boys are in speech therapy each week, play therapy, OT, and CBRS. I also have the support of respite so that I can recharge my battery and be the best mom possible and provide my kids the stability and support that they need.*

*My family makes too much money for traditional Medicaid. We have insurance and use Medicaid as a secondary. Without Medicaid, we would be paying roughly \$332 per WEEK in co-pays. Additionally, we would lose all CBRS and respite services since Medicaid is the only insurance that covers these services. Without the support of the YES program, my family would not be able to afford to continue utilizing these services, and my children would suffer greatly! Families with a higher income bracket who also have a higher medical need benefit from these services. And I assure you, it is needed.*

*~ Lani, Parent, Idaho Falls*



IDAHO COUNCIL ON  
**DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES**

This project was supported, in part by the Idaho State Independent Living Council, under grant number 250IDILSG-02 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

This work is supported by a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201 with 100% federal funding award totaling \$527,344 (Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Grant No.: 2401IDSCDD-01). Council efforts are those of the grantee and do not necessarily represent the official views of nor are endorsed by ACL, HHS, or the U.S. government.