



Children's Health at Risk

Republicans are Gambling with the Health of Students by Threatening to Cut Medicaid

Medicaid is vital for our nation's students and schools, providing reimbursement for many services provided at school-based health centers. Further, through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Medicaid reimburses schools for certain medically necessary services provided to Medicaid-eligible children with an individualized education plan (IEP) or individualized family service plan (IFSP). Both IEPs and IFSPs establish the services, accommodations, and supports needed to ensure that the student receives a free, appropriate public education. States received nearly \$2 billion in federal Medicaid funding for these school-based services in 2015. Despite the proven need for these services, Republicans have proposed to cut Medicaid spending by 25 percent. This cut will severely impact children most in need, threaten school-based services, and cut off the funding that schools rely on to provide these services.

The services on the chopping block through changes to Medicaid include:

- **Services for IEP or IFSP eligible students.** Students with disabilities are legally entitled to receive services that allow them to have meaningful access to education. These students can receive a range of health and supportive services that include: physical therapy, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, psychological services, medical screenings, and transportation.
- **Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT).** This comprehensive benefit – often provided in a school setting – ensures that students receive appropriate physical, mental, and developmental health services.
- **Vision and hearing screenings.** Currently, schools screen the vision and hearing development of young children. If needed, children are referred to a specialist or given the necessary resources to ensure they are ready to focus and learn in the classroom.
- **Mental health counseling.** Children living in under-resourced neighborhoods often attend school with the same post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms exhibited by adults returning from combat environments due to the constant stress, fear, and uncertainty they witness or experience. Schools are best able to mitigate the impact of stressful environments through mental health screenings and counseling.
- **Diabetes and asthma diagnosis and management.** A child cannot learn if he or she is suffering from the effects of undiagnosed or mismanaged ailments. For instance, [asthma is a leading chronic illness among children and adolescents in the United States and is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism](#). Managing these chronic conditions is necessary for children to be able to succeed in school.
- **Speech therapy.** Children learn and develop at different speeds. Speech impediments can slow down a child's ability to learn at grade level, but can be managed and even eliminated through speech therapy interventions.
- **Services mitigating the effects of lead.** Nearly 3,000 other communities have lead contamination levels higher than Flint, Michigan. Lead exposure can be mitigated through various interventions, such as cognitive development services, which are often performed in a school setting and funded through Medicaid.