

PROTECT OUR CARE

Congresswoman Hillary Scholten to Join Protect Our Care Michigan to Push Back on Proposed Cuts to Medicaid and Work to Protect Coverage for Vulnerable Citizens



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Lansing, Michigan – Today, U.S. Congresswoman **Hillary Scholten** and U.S Department of Health and Human Services Regional Director **Michael Cabonargi** joined Protect Our Care Michigan to highlight the vital role the Medicaid program serves in providing affordable health care coverage and access to services for Michiganders. One in four Americans relies on

Medicaid for access to health care, and the program serves people from all backgrounds, including children, mothers, people of color, people with disabilities, working families, rural Americans, and seniors.

April marked the [seventh annual Medicaid Awareness Month](#) and speakers shared what President Biden and Democrats in Congress have done to strengthen Medicaid in the face of ongoing attacks from Republicans who want to severely cut funding for the program and limit access to care.

Democrats have created incentives for states to expand Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act, stopped onerous work requirements, pushed for expanded postpartum coverage, and worked to minimize the impacts of Medicaid unwinding. Meanwhile, Republicans have proposed [slashing trillions of dollars](#) from Medicaid through capping federal funding and other draconian measures designed to reduce the number of Medicaid beneficiaries through bureaucratic tripwires that kick them off the program. If Republicans get their way and repeal Medicaid expansion, [1 million Michiganders'](#) coverage will be at risk. When it comes to health care, the contrast between Democrats and Republicans health care agenda couldn't be clearer.

"The importance of Medicaid continuation is critical to everyone whether they live in the urban core in Grand Rapids or the rural parts of Ottawa and Muskegon counties stretching between the lake shore and the city," said U.S. Congresswoman **Hillary Scholten**. "When people are healthy they are more able to work, care for their families and live successful and prosperous lives. When they are healthy, our communities are healthy."

"Medicaid is a true gamechanger for millions of working families and hardworking Americans, including 3 million here in Michigan who can see a doctor, get treatment and fill their prescriptions through their health plan," said **Michael Cabonargi**, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Regional Director. "Nationwide, Medicaid is also an essential source of coverage for women and children, including more than 18 million women and about 40 million children. Again and again, we see the evidence that Medicaid is helping working families stay healthy and truly improving people's lives."

"Medicaid is the largest payer of reproductive health care coverage, covering nearly 17 million people who need access to services such as birth control, family planning, annual exams, prenatal and maternity care, breast and cervical cancer screenings, and STD testing and treatment," said **Ashlea Phenicie**, Chief Advocacy Officer for Planned Parenthood of Michigan. "Medicaid also increases equitable access to sexual and reproductive care, particularly for our patients who often face discrimination in the health care system, including people with low incomes, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and women. Any cuts to Medicaid would have devastating consequences that can make or break access to lifesaving treatment."

"Medicaid is the lynchpin that determines whether those living with disabilities can lead independent lives, work and contribute to their communities," said **Chloe Bayer**, benefits

specialist for Disability Advocates of Kent County. “The vast majority of those with disabilities rely on Medicaid to cover their medications, therapies and home health devices, and in some cases transportation to medical appointments. That makes it imperative that we do everything we can to keep Medicaid fully funded so everyone can access health care when they need it, not just when they can afford it.”

“It can’t be overstated: Medicaid is critical for those with disabilities to maintain their independence,” said **Kristen Kelling**, independent living specialist with the nonprofit, nonpartisan Disability Advocates of Kent County. “I was born blind and utilize a Medicaid benefit that covers my transportation to and from doctors’ appointments. Without Medicaid, I’d have to rely on friends or family members to get me to and from medical appointments or skip them entirely. That’s why we must do everything we can to protect Medicaid funding and expand access to those who need it most.”

You can watch the full event [here](#), and learn more about how Medicaid benefits Americans across the country [here](#).

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