

## Protect Medicaid: Medicaid's Key Role in Addressing the Opioid Crisis

### The Problem

- The U.S. is losing more than [100,000](#) people a year — or nearly 300 people a day — to drug overdose. [States](#) in the Appalachian region and parts of the South, including West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Louisiana have been hit the hardest.
- Approximately [48.5 million adults](#) in the U.S. were affected by substance use disorder (SUD) in 2023. [21% of adults](#) with any SUD were covered by Medicaid in 2020.

### Stacia T./Cottonwood, Arizona

Stacia suffered from substance use disorder and coinciding mental health symptoms for many years, which eventually caused her to lose her home, custody of her children, and almost her life. After hitting rock bottom, Stacia checked herself into a facility that treats substance abuse and mental health issues holistically. Medicaid covered Stacia's stay as she worked to recover from years of addiction.

Stacia graduated and has stayed sober. Two years later, she was hired by the facility that helped save her life. Now the lead behavioral health worker, she helps patients through the same challenges that she overcame.



### Medicaid is Essential: The Facts

- Medicaid is the single [largest funder](#) of mental health and SUD care in the country.
- Expanding Medicaid eligibility resulted in a significant increase in coverage for people with opioid use disorder (OUD). [Hospitalizations](#) for uninsured patients dropped by 79 percent from 13.4 percent in 2013 (before expansion) to just 2.9 percent two years later in states that expanded Medicaid.
- States with particularly high [overdose mortality rates](#) — West Virginia, Maine, Ohio, New Mexico and Kentucky — have benefited from increased SUD treatment availability due to Medicaid eligibility expansion. [Medicaid spending](#) on prescription drugs to treat OUDs, the gold standard evidence-based treatment for OUD, more than doubled between 2011 and 2016. More recently, [two-thirds](#) of Medicaid enrollees with OUD received medications for OUD, in 2021.
- [Research](#) shows expanding Medicaid eligibility has had significant effects on reducing arrests, crime rates, criminal-legal system involvement, recidivism, and state expenditures.
- Adults with OUD are almost [twice as likely](#) to receive treatment if they have Medicaid, compared to being uninsured or on private insurance.
- [80%](#) of Americans think that SUD treatment should be readily available and accessible to all, and Medicaid coverage can achieve that goal.

### Oppose All Cuts to Medicaid!!!