



California's Protection & Advocacy System
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FACT SHEET: How does Medicaid/ Medi-Cal Affect Veterans?

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Medicaid is a critically important source of health care coverage for veterans with disabilities. Nationwide, approximately 1.75 million veterans need Medicaid.¹ Many of them have traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, and other disabilities, and are at grave risk if Medicaid is cut.

Of the 1.75 million receiving Medicaid, about 340,000 veterans nationally receive coverage through the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In those states that expanded Medicaid (which includes California), health care coverage for veterans increased by 42%.² In California, 183,000 veterans receive Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program).

Many veterans need Medicaid because they do not receive VA health care

Medicaid is critically important because not all veterans qualify to receive health insurance through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Eligibility relates to a variety of factors, including minimum service requirements as well as disability and discharge status. According to the Veterans

¹ <http://familiesusa.org/product/cutting-medicaid-would-hurt-veterans> "Return to Main Document"

² <https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/reports/2016/rwjf431690> "Return to Main Document"

Administration, in 2014 only 40 percent of all veterans were enrolled in the VA health care system.³

According to Families USA, forty percent of the 913,000 working-age veterans (18-64) with Medicaid had no other source of health coverage. Without Medicaid coverage, they would be uninsured. Medicaid is their only way to reliably get access to needed care.

Cutting or Reducing Medicaid Will Harm Veterans

The number of veterans whose health care is endangered by potential cuts to Medicaid exceeds the number of all service members currently on active duty – about 1.3 million in uniform, according to Department of Defense budget numbers.⁴ Veterans are at a higher risk than most for unique and sometimes serious or complicated health care issues as a result of their service. These health conditions might include musculoskeletal conditions, traumatic brain injuries, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Moreover, proposals to eliminate essential health benefits which require Medicaid to offer mental health, substance use, and behavioral health services will disproportionately harm veterans.⁵

Disability Rights California is funded by a variety of sources, for a complete list of funders, go to <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/Documents/ListofGrantsAndContracts.html>.

³ <http://familiesusa.org/product/cutting-medicaid-would-hurt-veterans> “Return to Main Document”

⁴ <http://familiesusa.org/press-release/2017/report-republican-medicaid-cuts-threaten-health-care-175-million-veterans> “Return to Main Document”

⁵ “A [2015 survey](#) from the nonprofit Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America found that 58% of respondents reported having a mental health injury due to their service. Decreasing mental health coverage for Medicaid enrollees could be detrimental for vets, who suffer from mental health issues like PTSD and are at [higher risks of suicide](#) than the general population.” (<http://time.com/money/4699647/gop-health-care-plan-veterans/>) “Return to Main Document”