



## **Don't Be Fooled; Medicaid Cuts Will Be Painful**

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To preserve tax cuts for the richest Americans, [Republicans](#) plan to add over two trillion dollars to the national debt and make deep cuts to a wide range of government programs. Medicaid is a prime target. As much as Republicans claim that these reductions will simply minimize [waste, fraud, and abuse](#), it is impossible to make cuts of this magnitude to Medicaid without hurting thousands and thousands of Virginians.

Let's do a little math. The GOP budget would reduce federal Medicaid spending by \$625 billion over the next decade. [Virginia's share](#) of that would be almost \$2 billion. Could Virginia find 200 million dollars a year, ten years in a row, in Medicaid waste, fraud, and abuse? No.

Virginia has operated a Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU), based in the Attorney General's office, for decades. It currently has more than 100 employees in Richmond and four regional offices. In 2023-24, this unit collected [\\$7.8 million](#) from providers who defrauded or tried to defraud Medicaid. The year before that they collected [\\$10 million](#). That's a far cry from \$200 million a year.

Virginia's MFCU is not exactly a laggard. Every state in the country has a similar unit, and over the past decade they have recovered a total of [five billion dollars](#). Now compare that with the 625 billion dollars in Medicaid cuts nationwide that Republicans want in the next decade.

Maybe lots of individuals are defrauding Medicaid, receiving benefits even though they are ineligible? Well, states recently finished "unwinding" their Medicaid programs, reviewing the status of every single case (these reviews had been suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic). By August 2024, almost 500,000 people had been [disenrolled](#) from Virginia's Medicaid program. Not much money left on that

table.

Maybe Republicans think that Medicaid is wasted on or abused by people who are legally eligible. Currently, 1.9 million Virginians receive health insurance from [Medicaid](#). Most of them are low-income children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and pregnant women. Even Ebenezer Scrooge would have trouble saying those groups don't deserve help.

The chief problem appears to be working-age adults. Republicans want to add [work requirements](#) to discourage those adults from applying for Medicaid or to encourage them to leave Medicaid. But one-quarter of those adults are disabled and almost half are employed. Some of the rest will soon leave Medicaid, and some will be working within a year.

Who is left? Only [three percent](#) of Medicaid recipients are able-bodied, working-age adults who are chronically unemployed.

If Republicans make it harder for working-age adults to get Medicaid, they are essentially denying them health insurance. These adults will be working at jobs that require insurance cost-sharing that most workers cannot afford, or jobs that do not come with health insurance. Many of these workers won't be able to afford ACA Marketplace plans, either.

The [Congressional Budget Office](#) estimates that the GOP's Medicaid cuts will push more than seven million Americans into the uninsured category, much of that due to work requirements. The [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), whose numbers are widely respected in Washington, projects that even more people will be uninsured.

What about Virginia? According to the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), one of the country's leading experts on health policy, the GOP budget would eventually cut Medicaid enrollment in Virginia by 21% in 2034. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people with low incomes will be postponing medical care because they could not afford it. Or they will be counting on charitable care, jeopardizing the fiscal health of our hospitals, especially [rural hospitals](#).

Maybe Republicans think that Medicaid recipients are getting too much medical care. But the [most expensive groups](#), by far, are the elderly and people with disabilities. Many of them have serious medical problems that cannot be treated cheaply. Which services should we deny them?

Maybe Republicans think that doctors and hospitals are abusing the system and getting paid too much for treating Medicaid patients. However, Medicaid already [reimburses medical providers](#) less than Medicare or private health insurance for most procedures.

Yes, there is some waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicaid, just as there is throughout our health care system and in every large organization, public or private. But it is not nearly enough to pay for the cuts to Medicaid that Republicans in Washington are trying to ram through Congress with minimal debate or public input. If Republican officials from Virginia agree with these cuts, they should be preparing their constituents for more hardship and literally more pain.

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