American Diabetes Association®

May 1, 2018

The Honorable Laura Cox
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Chair Cox and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

This is to request that you oppose SB 897 or any legislation which proposes to require the state to apply for a Medicaid waiver to impose work requirements on certain beneficiaries as a condition of continued Medicaid eligibility.

Access to affordable, adequate health coverage is critically important for the more than 3.8 million Michiganders living with or at risk for diabetes and anyone with a chronic health condition. When people are not able to afford the care, tools, and services necessary to effectively manage their diabetes, they scale back or forego the treatment they need, potentially leading to costly complications and even death.

Whereas federal law does allow for the submission of Section 1115 waivers to launch experimental or pilot programs, such programs must "promote the objective of the Medicaid program." Work requirements do not promote the objective of the Medicaid program; instead, they represent another hurdle that Medicaid-eligible individuals must overcome in order to access their medical care.

Adults with diabetes are disproportionately covered by Medicaid. For low income individuals with diabetes, access to Medicaid coverage is essential to managing their health. Medicaid provides medical assistance to those who cannot afford the costs of medically necessary services. Linking work status to Medicaid eligibility is contrary to its fundamental intent and instead can block access to the health care individuals need to be able to work. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, most people on Medicaid who can work do so. In addition, the Heritage Foundation and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities have concluded that, rather than encouraging employment, instituting work requirements as a condition of Medicaid eligibility will lead to higher uninsured rates and higher emergency room visits by uninsured individuals who would have been eligible for Medicaid coverage.

1 in 11
Americans has diabetes today.

Every 21 seconds, someone in the United States is diagnosed with diabetes.

Nearly
18,000
youth are diagnosed with type 1 diabetes every year.

A study by the National Bureau of Economic Research concluded Medicaid coverage increases utilization of primary and preventive services, lowers out-of-pocket medical spending and medical debt, and results in better self-reported physical and mental health. In addition, Medicaid enrollees are 15 percent more likely to be screened for diabetes than someone who is uninsured. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) diabetes data shows prevention programs and early detection can prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes and reduce state spending.

Gary Dougherty
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On behalf of the 3.8 million Michiganders living with or at risk for diabetes, I urge you to oppose SB 897 and any other effort to impose work requirements on otherwise eligible Medicaid beneficiaries.

Sincerely,

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