



# Strengthening Medicaid Amid COVID-19 Crisis

**As cases of COVID-19 continue to increase across the country, the Modern Medicaid Alliance is keenly focused on how the virus and its economic impacts are affecting hundreds of millions of Americans and states' Medicaid programs. It is critical that policymakers prioritize strengthening America's Medicaid program in pending COVID-19 relief legislation.**

Specifically, Congress must enhance federal financing for Medicaid by **increasing states' Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to a total of at least 12 percentage points and include dedicated funds for Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS).**

**Medicaid's Vital Role for America** – Medicaid is the largest health care program in the country, covering more than 73 million people, or about 1 in 5 Americans.

- Over the past 50 years, Medicaid has played a critical role in helping Americans receive high-quality, cost-effective care.
- Medicaid is a safety net for vulnerable populations when they need it most, including millions of children, older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans.

**Increased Enrollment During COVID-19** – The number of Americans who rely on Medicaid has grown dramatically during the COVID-19 crisis.

- From February to June 2020, Medicaid enrollment increased by more than [3.4 million](#) people, or 4.8% nationwide.
- The [fastest enrollment growth](#) has occurred among non-elderly, non-disabled adults.
- States expect Medicaid enrollment and spending to increase by more than [8%](#) in fiscal year 2021.
- At the same time, state revenues are dropping significantly, and overall state budget shortfalls are [projected](#) to reach \$555 billion through 2022.

**Consequences of Inaction** – Without increased funding for Medicaid, hardworking Americans could be denied access to the essential care they need and deserve. This is especially true for some of the hardest hit community members like frontline workers, those with substance use disorders and behavioral health concerns, and communities of color. Enrollees stand to face [devastating consequences](#), such as:

- Threatening children's access to care, due to [lower payments](#) to children's hospitals and pediatric providers.
- Fewer older adults able to stay in their homes and communities, as programs [reduce or eliminate](#) home and community-based services and supports.
- Decreased access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment, at the same time that opioid overdoses skyrocket across the country, due to [cuts to program funding](#). Medicaid is the largest payer for mental health care, and one-third of those in the expansion population have mental health and substance use disorder needs.
- Longer waitlists for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as crucial home and community-based services [may be eliminated](#).



**Bipartisan Consensus** – Support for Medicaid is a bipartisan issue. Recent [polling](#) found that:

- 83% of voters think increasing funding for Medicaid amid COVID-19 should be a priority for Congress, including a bipartisan majority of Democrats (94%) and Republicans (73%).
- Over three-quarters of voters (79%) think it is better for lawmakers to increase spending on public programs like Medicaid rather than decrease spending.

Together, we can and will overcome the COVID-19 crisis. The Modern Medicaid Alliance will continue to advocate for increased federal funding for Medicaid amid the COVID-19 crisis.

**For more Medicaid enrollment and polling information, visit the Modern Medicaid Alliance's [Medicaid Dashboard](#) today.**

