

# Why Medicaid Matters to Me: Five New York Stories



*Medicaid*  
Medicaid Matters New York  
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Medicaid Matters New York thanks the following organizations that contributed these stories:

Make the Road New York  
New York Legal Assistance Group  
New York Self-Determination Coalition

## Athena & Carolyn, Brooklyn

### Athena:

I am 26 years old, live in Brooklyn, and have Cerebral Palsy. My goals are to become a French teacher and get involved in politics. In addition to professional experience working in advocacy for people with disabilities, I currently volunteer teaching French at the Brooklyn Public Library. I also co-organize a French conversation meetup.



*Athena and her parents at her college graduation*



*There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to ensure that I get the personal care I need to be able to participate fully in my life and in all of these activities. These services are all funded solely by Medicaid.*

My personal care assistants help me get out of bed, get dressed, use the bathroom, shower, support me at work, and accompany me outside, so that I stay safe.

Cuts to Medicaid put people with disabilities at risk for living in nursing homes or hospitals. We cannot return to the 1960s and 70s in America, during which people with disabilities were institutionalized with low quality of life. Medicaid services allow us to participate actively in our communities, and live safely in our own homes.

### Carolyn:



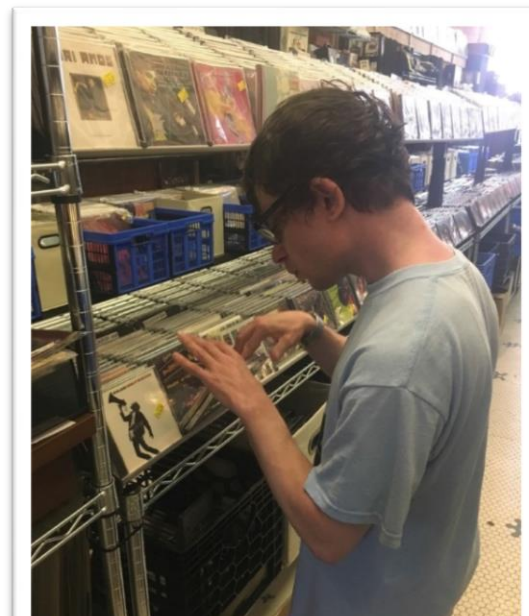
*Because of Medicaid, my daughter Athena has been able to graduate from Brooklyn College with a degree in French, has worked two jobs outside the home, and lives an active life as part of her community. If Medicaid funding is cut, Athena could end up in a nursing home—an expensive and tragic waste of a vibrant young life.*

## Maggie & Jake, Elmira

My son Jake, and 100,000 other New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities are able to live in their homes and communities thanks to Medicaid. As Jake has grown, he continues to be challenged by multiple disabilities. He needs constant supervision in order to be safe, but with Medicaid-funded direct support services, Jake has a job at a music store restocking CDs for several hours each week, a productive member of the community.



*As a family, we try to get the best health coverage we can, but regardless of how hard parents work, there's NO WAY for any family to pay for this level of long-term care.*



*Jake, Maggie's son, works at a music store*

These benefits are not just for people with developmental disabilities. They are also used by people with traumatic brain injuries, people who are physically disabled, and the elderly who receive care in their home.

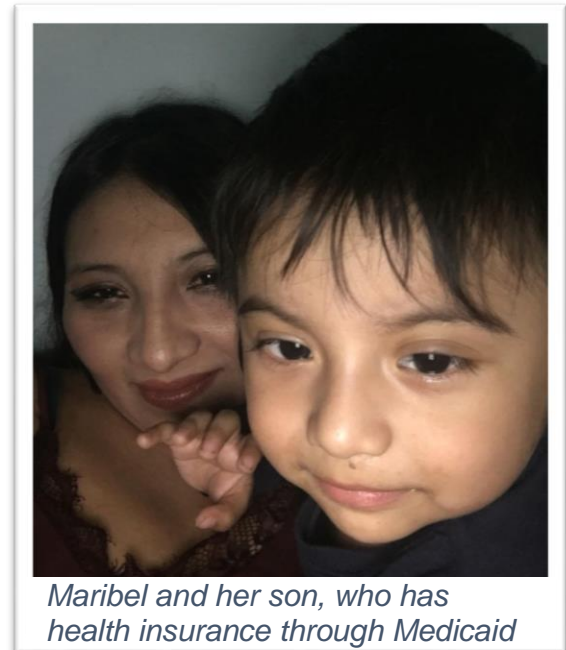



*Cuts to Medicaid will land people on the street, in hospital emergency rooms, or back in institutions.*

## Maribel, Staten Island

Maribel is a new mom who lives on Staten Island. When her son was born in 2015, she did not have health insurance. Like many other uninsured parents, Maribel worried that she would never be able to afford to pay for her son's health care expenses out of pocket.

Fortunately for both her finances and for her son's well-being, Maribel was informed by an outreach worker about New York State of Health. She promptly scheduled a meeting with a Navigator to learn about low-cost health care options for her family, and with their assistance, was able to enroll her son in Medicaid.



 *Without Medicaid, uninsured parents like Maribel must either forgo necessary healthcare for their children because they can't afford it, or risk going into serious debt from sky-high medical bills.*


## Mr. McN, New York City

After 6 months in a nursing home after a fall that broke his hip, Mr. McN, then 102 years old, wished to return to his Lower East Side Manhattan apartment. Because of the accident, he could now only do so with 24-hour care.

 *Mr. McN wished to pass away peacefully at his apartment, where he had lived for many years.*


Despite many challenges in navigating the eligibility procedures for Medicaid and for managed care plans to assess his needs while he was still in the nursing home, Mr. McN was able to return home. His advocate, a close friend, successfully worked through these obstacles and secured his discharge with home care through Medicaid.

According to a close friend, the moment Mr. McN arrived home, people in his apartment building were flocking around him to welcome him back. Mr. McN lived in his apartment for two months before passing away peacefully at home. During his final days, many beloved friends visited him to say their goodbyes.

 *Medicaid allowed Mr. McN to receive hospice care at home during his last week of life, where he experienced no pain, even in his last hours. He died in a dignified, natural way, surrounded by loved ones.*

## Miguel, Queens

Miguel is an immigrant from the Dominican Republic who lives in Elmhurst, New York with his wife and their three children. Miguel is the sole provider for his family with an estimated annual income of \$33,372. At 50 years old, he noticed serious deterioration in his health because of his untreated diabetes. Miguel went without health insurance for a long time because he believed it was too expensive and that he did not qualify for low cost insurance. After several years of trying to manage his diabetes on his own, he felt that it was time to seek professional medical help. With the help of a community healthcare organization, Miguel discovered he was eligible for Medicaid.

 *Medicaid has made it possible for Miguel to access the care he needs to stay healthy for both himself and his family.*

Medicaid Matters New York (MMNY) is the statewide coalition dedicated to advancing the interests of Medicaid beneficiaries. Over 150 coalition partners work hard to ensure policymakers understand the importance of Medicaid to low-income and vulnerable New Yorkers. MMNY has and continues to play a critical role in influencing reform of the Medicaid system in New York State.

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