

# Who gets Medicaid in Pennsylvania?



What difference does it make in their lives? Here we highlight a handful of Pennsylvanians who have agreed to share their stories.

## Medicaid Covers: Children with Special Needs



***Brody Park,  
Wayne County***

Brody is a 9-year-old boy diagnosed with Lesch-Nyhan Syndrome (LNS), a rare genetic disorder that results in neurological and physical disabilities. Brody uses a wheelchair to get around, is limited in his ability to communicate, and requires constant one-on-one supervision and care from a nurse or trained caregiver. When his parents are at work or sleeping, Medicaid covers the skilled nurse needed to administer Brody's medications, feed him through his g-tube, and ensure his safety and health.

Medicaid allows Brody to receive the care he needs to remain in his own home, with his family, rather than a hospital or institution.

***Benjamin Graham,  
Luzerne County***

Benjamin is a 7-year-old boy with Lennox Gastaut Syndrome, a severe form of epilepsy that is very difficult to treat. He experiences grand mal seizures where he stops breathing. These seizures can occur without warning.

As a result, when Benjamin is at school and away from his parents, he needs a one-on-one nurse to watch for seizure activity and to administer rescue medication. The school nurse splits her time between two elementary schools and cannot meet his needs. Medicaid pays for a nurse to attend school with Benjamin. Because of Medicaid, Benjamin is able to attend school where he learns and thrives surrounded by his peers.



## Medicaid Covers: Older Adults & Adults with Disabilities

### *Susan & Grant Amway, Chester County*

Susan and Grant both have disabilities, and depend on Medicaid and Medicare to get the health care they need. Medicaid covers the in-home supports that Grant needs to stay out of a nursing home and in his own home with Susan.

Grant suffers from a number of health problems, including traumatic brain injury, heart failure, diabetes, and esophageal cancer. He is treated by a team of nearly three dozen doctors and takes over 50 medications. Susan has health problems too. She suffers from epilepsy, sleep apnea, spinal cord damage, and a heart condition that increases her risk of stroke. They get by on Social Security Disability income. Medicaid covers the Medicare cost-sharing and deductibles that they would not be able to otherwise afford (e.g. for doctor's visits and Grant's wheelchair.)



Medicaid also covers the items that Medicare doesn't, like suppositories, adult diapers, and liquid nutrition. Although navigating the two insurances has presented challenges over the years, they are extremely grateful for Medicaid.

Grant has been able to avoid a nursing home and stay in his home because of Medicaid long term care supports. Through a "waiver" program that provides in-home services and supports, Medicaid covers 40 hours a week of personal care assistance. It also covered a home modification to make Grant's bathroom accessible and a special hospital bed he needed because of his size. And it covers the regular service and repair of a wheelchair lift that enables Grant to get out of his house to attend his medical appointments and participate as fully as possible in life activities. Grant and Susan are thankful that they receive this help through Medicaid so that, despite their disabilities, they can continue living with one another and in the house that they love.

***Linda Morris,  
Allegheny County***

As she approaches her 61st birthday, Linda likes to spend as much time as she can with her granddaughter. Having Medicaid coverage has helped her maximize that time. Medicaid allows Linda to get the care she needs to stabilize her health and avoid going back into the hospital. Linda enrolled in expanded Medicaid in 2015. Prior to that, she was uninsured for over seven years. Following her husband's death, she could afford neither health insurance nor the regular testing supplies and insulin required to manage her diabetes. She also struggled to afford the medications needed for her depression and bipolar disorder.

Now on Medicaid, Linda continues to have health issues – like the diabetic retinopathy that causes swelling and bleeding in her eyes – but her health is stable. Medicaid has allowed her to afford her medications, to keep her regular therapy appointments, and to bring her blood glucose down from alarming levels to under control. (Her A1C level has fallen from 12 to 7.4.) Medicaid has allowed Linda to worry less about her health and to focus on more important things, like spending time with her granddaughter.

## **Medicaid Covers: Low-Wage Workers**

***Wendy White,  
Tioga County***

Despite her significant health problems, Wendy works full-time. She's able to work forty hours a week or more as a caretaker because Medicaid allows her to manage her degenerative disc disease, diabetes, and other health conditions. Her job does not offer health insurance. She has had Medicaid for nearly a year, and it has given a quality of life she would not otherwise have. Medicaid covers the physical therapy she needs for her back, the insulin she needs for her diabetes, and the medications she needs for her cardiac problems. Medicaid allows her work.

As Wendy explains, “I don't know where I would be right now without Medicaid, probably sitting home sick and in pain.”

## **Take action.**

Share your own stories about Medicaid's value and the importance of continued federal funding. Individuals who are worried about the future of Medicaid are encouraged to call their [U.S. Representatives](#) and [Senators](#).