

'Not be able to fix that': Gov. warns of what Pa. will lose with Medicaid cuts

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By Marc Levy, Brendan Brightman and Tim Furlong • Published May 15, 2025 • Updated on May 15, 2025 at 11:13 pm • Source: NBC Philadelphia, Copyright AP – Associated Press

What to Know

- Gov. Josh Shapiro is warning that cuts to Medicaid health care that Congress is considering would mean billions of dollars in lost federal aid to Pennsylvania, hundreds of thousands of people losing access to the program and more rural hospitals shutting their doors.
- Shapiro said Wednesday that the state will be unable to make up that amount of lost federal aid.
- Estimates from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office show that at least 7.6 million people could lose health insurance with the proposed Medicaid cuts.
- The precise contours of cuts to Medicaid are being hammered out in the GOP-controlled U.S. House.
- Republicans say they're trying to make Medicaid work better.

Gov. Josh Shapiro warned Wednesday that [the Medicaid cuts Congress is considering](#) would mean billions of dollars in lost federal aid to Pennsylvania, hundreds of thousands of people losing access to the health insurance program and more struggling rural hospitals shutting their doors.

Shapiro, a Democrat who is considered a potential White House contender in 2028, said that if the cuts are made, the state would be unable to make up that amount of lost federal aid.

"I just need to stress: there is no back-filling at the state level," Shapiro told WILK-FM radio in Wilkes-Barre. "There are no dollars available at the state level to make up for these cuts at the federal level. So if they cut someone off Medicaid, they're off. We will not be able to fix that for them."

Besides hundreds of thousands of people losing access to Medicaid in Pennsylvania, billions of dollars in funding cuts would accelerate the shuttering of rural hospitals "which are teetering on the brink of closure," Shapiro said.

Pennsylvania is already facing a thorny situation with Medicaid costs.

Shapiro's proposed budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 seeks \$2.5 billion more for Medicaid after budget-makers belatedly realized that the people remaining on Medicaid rolls after the COVID-19 pandemic are sicker than anticipated — and costlier to care for.

The governor does have a cushion of about \$10.5 billion in reserve, thanks to federal COVID-19 relief and inflation-juiced tax collections over the past few years.

His administration is also trying to reduce the fast-rising amount Pennsylvania pays for popular GLP-1 drugs such as Wegovy, Ozempic and Zepbound, as are a number of other states.

Medicaid is a federal-state partnership that helps pay for the health care of low-income people of any age and long-term nursing care. There are 72 million enrollees nationwide, including 3 million in Pennsylvania, or almost one in four Pennsylvanians. Its annual cost is approaching \$1 trillion, including about \$50 billion in Pennsylvania.

The precise contours of forthcoming cuts to Medicaid are [being hammered out](#) in the Republican-controlled U.S. House as part of a bill package that includes tax breaks of more than \$5 trillion and sizable reductions in food stamps and programs to fight climate change.

As part of it, Republicans are [proposing cuts](#) of nearly \$800 billion over the decade to Medicaid.

Estimates from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office show that at least 7.6 million people could lose health insurance with the Medicaid cuts.

Republicans say they are trying to make Medicaid work better by rooting out waste and inefficiencies. Shapiro disputed that, saying voting to cut Medicaid spending is "voting to cut their constituents off from lifesaving health care access."