

How YOU Can Get out the Message that *Medicaid Matters for People with HIV*

Grassroots advocacy is critically needed to fight numerous Congressional attacks on Medicaid. Opponents to health care reform need to hear from their constituents that proposals to restructure or scale back Medicaid will put low-income individuals, including those living with HIV/AIDS at risk. YOU can help Congress get the message that they must support and defend the largest provider of health care for people living with HIV. Here are five ways you can become a Medicaid defense advocate:

1. **Call your member of Congress with this message:** *Congress must prioritize the lives of low-income Americans AND help states save scarce resources by upholding the federal commitment to Medicaid.* Go to ProjectVoteSmart.org to find out who represents you in Congress and how to reach them.
2. **Connect with other organizations in your state who are working on Medicaid advocacy.** Check out Community Catalyst's website (insert website here) to find out who is leading Medicaid advocacy in your state and how to connect with them.
3. **Organize in-district visits with your U.S. senators and representative.** You don't

have to be in Washington D.C. to meet with your member of Congress. You can set up meetings in your home state. Check out the *Defending Medicaid in YOUR Congressional District* slides to learn everything you need to know about setting up a meeting.

4. **Use the media to get the Medicaid message out.** Letters to the editor and op-eds are effective ways to educate your community about what the threats to Medicaid mean for low-income people with HIV/AIDS. The HIV Health Care Access Working Group created sample letters to the editor and op-eds that you can tweak and submit to your own local newspaper.
5. **Recruit others who are living with, impacted by, and working on HIV/AIDS issues to join you.** Ask friends, family, neighbors, support group members, people at your agency and others to make calls to Congress, submit a letter to the editor, respond to action alerts you receive, or participate in an in-district meeting.

Have questions? Need more ideas? Contact Dorothee Alsentzer with the Treatment Access Expansion Project at dalsentzer@harvard.law.edu or Jessica Terlikowski at AIDS United at jterlikowski@aidsunited.org.