



Public policy  
in the best interest  
of children

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Medicaid Work Requirements Would Mean Fewer Services For Children**

LANSING — Michigan's Children issued the following statement on the Michigan Senate's vote today to pass Senate Bill 897, implementing work requirements for Medicaid enrollees. The statement can be attributed to Michigan's Children President and CEO Matthew Gillard, who testified in opposition to the bill on April 19.

“We know from over two decades of work with children, youth, and families, overwhelming research, as well as common sense, that children who receive regular health care services reap lifelong benefits. They attend school ready to learn, are healthier, and are more likely to succeed as adults and generate more taxes. Healthy parents are more able to keep their children healthy, help in their communities and keep a job. Medicaid work requirements would decrease children's access to health care services, despite the current exemptions, because parents are still at-risk of losing their own coverage, which is a major factor in whether their kids get services, regardless of whether the children themselves are covered. According to Johns Hopkins University researchers, when their parents are covered, kids are more likely to see a medical professional for preventive care, reducing both the need for future services and long-term state costs. When parents can go to the doctor, they're more likely to bring their kids. This is true for all children and youth, be they age three, seven or seventeen.”

“If their parents lose health care under SB 897, not only will children and youth see fewer check-ups, out-of-pocket costs for emergencies may put their families at financial risk. Medicaid enrollees borrow less money for medical costs, a benefit that kids feel when their parents are more able to afford healthful food or safe housing.”

“The bill would also hurt youth who are transitioning out of the foster care system, many of whom negotiate long-term trauma. Recognizing the personal circumstances that might pull these young people temporarily off track, requirements for other foster care programs are crafted around the unique challenges they face, including fewer required hours and grace periods. These youth, who use physical and mental health services at higher than average rates, will struggle fulfill the work and education requirements in this bill.”

“And while many have suggested that child care support would be available for parents, Michigan has one of the worst child care systems in the country, and cannot guarantee care for every eligible family. State policies and a history of low investment have driven hundreds of providers out of the system, to the point that 48% of low-income people live in a child care desert, lacking access to licensed care. Our child care system needs major changes in order to be sound enough to even consider relying on for health care work requirements.”

*Michigan's Children is the only statewide independent voice working to ensure that public policies are made in the best interest of children and their families from cradle to career. Our emphasis is on influencing public policies that close equity gaps and ensure that children and youth who face the most challenges have the supports they need to succeed in school and life. By working to reform public policy, we improve the odds for all children, and support the work of those who provide services that help individual children overcome the odds. For more information about Michigan's Children, email Bobby Dorigo Jones, [robert@michiganschildren.org](mailto:robert@michiganschildren.org) or visit [michiganschildren.org](http://michiganschildren.org).*

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