

If you or someone you know have a personal story about the impact AHCCCS has had on your life, please send it to Share@azahcccs.gov.

All personal information will be redacted.

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New AHCCCS coverage gives cancer-stricken mom hope

By Guest Opinion

Published: January 4, 2013 at 8:38 am

My name is Laura Gargiulo and I am a 45 year-old single mom to Jack, my energetic 11year-old son. I have a bachelor of science in English and a master of education in secondary education and teach part time as an English adjunct professor at Phoenix College. Oh, and one more thing, I don't have health insurance. When facing tough household budget choices that came down to groceries or car payment, I found myself in crises.

After months of struggling with my impossible financial situation, I chose to keep my son's health insurance in place while letting my own lapse. It was a tough choice, but the immediate needs of food and transportation seemed so much more important to me at the time.

And then on Oct. 15, I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer.

"Invasive ductal carcinoma" the doctors called it. It didn't matter what they called it — I had cancer. Cancer. I have cancer? It was just a lump. Women always get lumps. They turn out to be nothing. They must be wrong. They must be. But they weren't. But how? Why me? I don't remember anything the doctor said afterward. He was talking, but the words weren't processing. A cold fear seized me, and I didn't know what was happening. It was as if I received a knock-out blow by Muhammad Ali and those little birds in cartoons were swirling around my head. Cancer. I have cancer.

I have cancer and now I have to deal with it. But I don't have health insurance — that was my first thought. I don't have health insurance.

My second thought was "What about Jack? What about my son? How am I going to get well for Jack if I can't afford the treatments? What are we going to do? What happens to him if I don't survive? What have I done? I was so healthy, I never imagined this. This is what happens to other people, right? I never realized that back when I was juggling my little household budget that the consequences would be so dire. Now what? Am I going to die?

The news was physically and mentally debilitating. I couldn't function. The knock-out blow lasted for days. I didn't know where to start, or what to do. My good friend, Dianne Sikel, who came with me to my appointment that day, had her wits about her. She called me later that day and told me to bring my birth certificate and driver's license. She said she found some program that would insure me because I had breast cancer. She said we needed to drive down there and hand-deliver the application.

I drove to her house and signed the documents she had laid on the table. We drove downtown to the government building and found the office of HealthCheck. It took a while, but we finally found the office. Her name was Virginia Warren and she was the programs office chief. She explained that the Arizona state Legislature had just passed the Breast & Cervical Cancer Treatment Program (BCCTP) under the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System.

We handed her the documents, and after making sure everything was in order, she looked at me and said, "You're approved. You are now covered by AHCCCS for everything, from your diagnosis, treatment, reconstructive surgery, up to five years after your diagnosis. The state Legislature just passed this bill for breast and cervical cancer patients in August. You are the third person to receive services. If you came in my office three months ago, I would have told you there is nothing we can do for you."

We all cried and hugged each other. It was the first time I smiled since hearing the news I had breast cancer. Within two days I had my health insurance card. Within a week I had appointments with a surgeon and an oncologist. Within two weeks I had surgery for a chemo port and started my chemo treatments.

It is now December and I am still undergoing my chemo treatments. I have four left. I'm not quite sure where I would be today if it weren't for the BCCTP and AHCCCS. I realize how fortunate I am that AHCCCS began this new program. When I first found out that I had cancer, the worst part wasn't that I had cancer, but that I wouldn't be able to take care of my son. I don't worry about that now. I have health insurance. I have coverage. I have hope.

— *Laura Gargiulo, a single mother, part-time English adjunct professor at Phoenix College.*

To:

Subject:

RE: Proposed Expansion of Arizona Medicaid Program by Governor Brewer

From: I

Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 4:48 PM

To: Expansion

Subject: Re: Proposed Expansion of Arizona Medicaid Program by Governor Brewer

I am in agreement of re-instatement of the Childless Adults provisions under the AZ Expansion Plan submitted for legislative re-consideration by the Governor. I think that along with individual responds and tribal responds supporting this position, it would be good if your office could coordindate a State Wide Tribal initiative to support what the Governor is proposing in chnage of legislation along this venue. And/or it might be something ITCA can consider and coordinate. I have found in the past that along with indivdual support and individual tribal responds which are good; that augmentation by a wider State wide plan/intiative is best, just like we did for the Medicare/Medicaid Waiver issues in AZ and in NM, which I was a part of.

From:
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 9:01 AM
To: Share
Subject: Personal Story

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi,

My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer a few years ago and if it wasn't for her able to receive AHCCCS benefits she would probably have still been struggling with cancer or have passed away. I believe AHCCCS is a very important program for the health of the community and it is crucial to have a Medicaid system that does not discriminate based on dependency of children or disabling conditions. I also work in a work in a hospital environment and do AHCCCS eligibility for individuals who do not have insurance. I have noticed many individuals unfortunately expire from chronic illnesses and other diseases due to lack of coverage. I hope that our leaders at the AZ legislature think otherwise before making other major cuts to the AHCCCS budget that could potentially threaten the health of our community and our way of living.

Thanks,

From:
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 11:20 AM
To: Share
Subject: SMI adults and preventative care

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Obviously there are many Arizonan's that suffer because they are not eligible for or cannot afford health care and go untreated. Similarly, these people's conditions become exceedingly more severe because preventative and ongoing treatments were not provided. it would be prudent to treat our fellow Arizonan's before the cost becomes too high in their daily life and our citizens bank accounts.

Moreover, many SMI childless adults have suffered unnecessarily with the cuts. They have been cast aside and provided no medication for their mental illness. As a last resort SMI adults have had to incur costly hospital visits to simply get their mood stabilizer (etc) so that they continue functioning at the shelter they are staying or so that they don't hurt themselves or others. This one woman I had seen had been a paramedic before she experienced personal trauma and became diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She was now living in a park and not a shelter because she could not get her medication. The client reported being "terrified that other people would attack her and was afraid she would have to attack first". This woman had to go to the ER to get her 10 day subscription for a mood stabilizer that would not be refilled after the 10 days and she would remain trapped in the same vicious cycle of not getting treatment.

From:
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 5:43 PM
To: Coverage
Subject: Medicaid Expansion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

As a long-time East Valley conservative Republican, I don't spend taxpayer dollars frivolously. However, as a citizen, this just makes sense. As a finance person, I am very attracted to the return on investment socially (lives improved or saved) and economically (reduced uncompensated care, \$1.4 billion in increased spending, increased sales taxes). The State Legislators can back out of the expansion all the way to 2017 if required. Any downside to this expansion cannot compare to the upside.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 11:27 AM
To: Coverage
Subject: Submit your comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Medicaid is good risk management policy for keeping healthcare costs economically viable.

Ask any acute care physician and they will tell you that the final weeks and/or months of end-of-life care is the most undercompensated or uncompensated care as well as being the most costly. Since everyone eventually dies, it makes sense to provide access to healthcare in order to maximize cost reduction strategies.

It is much cheaper for the State of Arizona to provide treatment for substance abuse rehabilitation than fund a liver transplant. And, it is by far a whole lot cheaper to pay for smoking cessation programs and obesity prevention through nutrition counseling and education rather than funding treatment for chronic and long-term diseases like lung cancer and COPD and adult onset diabetes.

"Smart is the new rich." Ditat Deus.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 2:39 PM
To: Share
Subject: Submit your story

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I am a person who lives with the diagnosis of a serious mental illness. A number of years ago my AHCCCS was cancelled due to making too much on my disability by less than a hundred dollars. After that cuts in the budget forced the public mental health system to make serious decisions on what services they could afford to provide. My medication Abilify, was cut from my provider's formulary. I have been in the SMI system for more than half my life. It has taken much of that time to find a medication that helped me get my psychotic symptoms under control. Abilify has done this.

When I was hurriedly taken off the medication, symptoms of rage, obsessive thinking and homicidal/suicidal ideation took hold. I was awake for days, ruminating on paranoid thoughts of the government. I found myself thinking more and more of expressing this rage by taking lives. Because of my state of mind, I could not separate my normal beliefs about people from the murderous thoughts that consumed me. Out of desperation and because I could no longer live with this torturous me, I took a large overdose. I ended up spending four days in the ICU because my lungs collapsed. I decided that it was to be my life or other's and I chose to end my own.

I am lucky. I lived and did not take anyone's life. I am also so fortunate to have family that has sacrificed to get me my medication. I now get the prescription of generic Abilify from Canada, because it is times cheaper. I am now able to advocate for lives and for society as a whole. I tell my story in hopes of educating people about mental illness and how to help. I wish I could stand up in front of Congress and let them hear my words. They so desperately need to insight into this issue. I hope this part of my story can enlighten someone the people have given decision making power. I am lucky and a rarity to be someone in the public SMI system who has family willing to help emotionally and financially. I am also fortunate that I know how to advocate for myself most of the time. Thank you for your time.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 4:56 PM
To: Coverage
Subject: AHCCCS Expansion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello AHCCCS:

I would like to express my strong support for Jan Brewer's plan to expand Medicaid in Arizona.

I am a supervisor and therapist at a public mental health agency in Tucson. I have worked with many single, childless patients who lost their AHCCCS two years ago. These clients have consistently expressed fear about what they would do if they got physically sick, and many have stopped taking their psychiatric medications because they can't afford to pay for them. One of my patients had to stop chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer because she cannot afford the treatment, and so she has resigned herself to death.

Many have mentally decompensated and been repeatedly hospitalized at the taxpayers' expense. It is much more cost-effective to provide regular outpatient case management, therapy and medications than it is to allow these patients to regularly access the highest and most expensive level of care.

In addition to the financial toll this is taking on the taxpayers of Arizona, there is a human cost. These patients have suffered significant damage to their self-esteem and their belief in themselves as accepted members of the community. They feel as though they are being punished for having mental illness. Twenty-six percent of Americans have a diagnosable mental illness, so there is no need to continue the stigma.

Sincerely,

Tucson

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 8:45 PM
To: Share
Subject: Submit your story

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I work in the mental health system and have seen first hand the effects that severe budget cuts have had on the SMI population. This group of individuals is often marginalized with ongoing stigma that continues to foster misunderstandings surrounding their need for adequate medical and psychiatric coverage. Some individuals require specific medications for psychiatric stability that are far too expensive to pay for out of pocket. One way to establish safer and healthier communities is to allow for individuals to receive necessary funding who are unable to sustain meaningful employment due to their disabilities. In addition, individuals who are receiving SSI / SSDI should not be placed in a "doughnut hole" where they are making a few dollars too much to qualify for medical coverage they desperately need to sustain basic survival.

- Clinician

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 11:33 PM
To: Share
Subject: My Story

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

After suffering most of my life as a child and all of my adulthood present with mental health disorders, finally in 2008 i got enough courage up to finally make a visit to my local behavioral health facility, i had AHCCCS at that time and it really paid a lot for what i could not cover on my own, i finally went through the intake process talked to a therapist and finally got to see a psychiatrist for the first time in my life, you cannot imagine how nervous i was at first but soon relieved that i could finally put a name to my mental disorders, my psychiatrist perscribed me meds, and i could see my therapist anytime i was feeling terrible and needed a shoulder to lean on, i had group sessions i attended every wednesday faithfully, i finally was getting the mental health care help i needed all because of AHCCCS, after a year or so i recieved a COLA from ssd and because i was over the cap by \$12 dollars or more i was cut off and left in the cold, no more group sessions, no more one on one therapy with my therapist, no more monthly visits with my psychiatrist, since 2008 i have not made very much progress in life, there are different types of mental illnesses and not everyone is the same some are worse off than others but we all need help, i want to be able to talk to a professional in the mental health field again, i want to help myself like i was doing before with the help of Horizon Human Services here in Globe, please listen to people like myself and others, many good people are hurting phsically and mentally and we need AHCCCS back. THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO TELL MY STORY.

From:
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 8:40 AM
To: Share
Subject: I am a Mother.....

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Who has a 35 year old son with chronic kidney and pancreatic disease. He has been in and out of the hospital in NY for the past 13 months. He can't work because of his disability. He has also applied for Social Security Disability and that is pending. Since he can't work, he wanted to move here to AZ to live with me so he can possibly get well and not incur mounting living expenses in NY, which he can't afford.

He did come here in August 2012 for a visit and was in Banner Baywood Hospital in Mesa more than he was at home during that month. He was here November 2012 to January 2013 and again he was in Banner Baywood Hospital more than he was at home. He is on Medicaid Health Insurance in NY, but because of the freeze of AHCCCS Health Insurance in Arizona for "**childless adults**" since July 2011, he did not qualify for AHCCCS here, even though he had NY Medicaid. I thought it unfair then to put the freeze on "**childless adults**" because sometimes even they have nowhere to turn when pressed with debilitating medical issues regardless of having a child or not. In fact, adults with children (and I'm all for the state helping children get medical insurance) cost the state more than if it were to help "**childless adults.**"

I am in full support of Governor Brewer's plan on lifting the freeze of "**childless adults**" and hope the people of Arizona get it right on helping "**childless adults**" like my son.

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From:
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 9:12 PM
To: Share
Subject: Submit your Story

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear AHCCCS,

I am a 25-year-old ASU student living with Ankylosing Spondylitis, a chronic autoimmune disease similar to Rheumatoid Arthritis. My disease attacks my eyes, and if I cannot take my medication I could go permanently blind. When my father died four years ago I had to turn to AHCCCS for health insurance - I could not get covered under my mother because she has Medicare which does not cover dependents. I will graduate at the end of this year and hopefully be able to find a job that provides health insurance - but if I cannot, I would like to know that AHCCCS will be around for me to fall back on until I can get my own insurance. When I graduate, I want to work for a Nonprofit that helps people living in poverty - if I cannot work due to blindness, my education will have been wasted. AHCCCS is crucial to the health of Arizona's citizens and it must be expanded to include all childless adults. It will add to our economy because it will produce healthy people who will be able to return to, and stay in, the workforce. It will ensure that no one should succumb to disability or death because they are uninsured. There is no other logical option.

Thank you,

From:
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 9:47 PM
To: Share
Subject: Share My Story

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Being a consumer of mental health services and suffering from co-occurring disorder, ocd, severe anxiety and intrusive thoughts, AHCCCS was the gateway for my diagnosis. Before seeing a qualified professional and suffering as a child into adulthood i never understood what i was going through and self medicated with alcohol to suppress what my mind was going through, when things finally came to a head i made the decision to finally go to my local behavioral health facility, it was frightening for me because it was all new to myself, once there i went through the intake process, got to go through a one on one counseling with a therapist and set up an appointment with a psychiatrist was put on the right medication went to group therapy and followed up with monthly visits to my psychiatrist, all of this was due to AHCCCS help, being on social security disability my financial resources were limited and i could not have done any of this without AHCCCS help, after a cost of living adjustment in 2009 i was taken off AHCCCS because i made just a little over \$20 dollars to much, i could not believe that i no longer had this help at my discretion, i was making good progress when getting the mental help that i needed and couldn't believe i had come this far just to be dropped like a nobody, my primary care physician can only do so much for me and i was lucky she was able to prescribe the medication my psychiatrist prescribed me, now i am at a standstill with my illness my mind and progress halted, Please Hear Our Voices! and bring back AHCCCS health care for individuals and families that need this extra HELP! Thank You! a Gila County Citizen.

From:
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 1:58 PM
To: Share
Subject: Submit your story

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

For the last 20 months, the 7/11 revisions in the AHCCS coverage have been harming the Phoenix area hospitals, big time. In September of 2011, after the Law related to AHCCS coverage was changed by the Legislature, charity care + bad debt went from \$8MM/month at St Joseph's Hospital to an average of \$16MM/month. By 7/12, that figure had increased to \$20MM/month, where it has remained ever since. Unless the coverage changes (so that more hospital patients have some insurance) , Phoenix area hospitals will spend themselves "dry" - and some will close. The Governor's plan is an excellent one – and it uses an approach that has been utilized in a dozen other States, a self-assessment by the Hospitals to create a pot of money. That "pot" is then sent to Washington and, in 2014, will result in ten times the self-assessment fund coming back to the hospitals. If this plan by the Governor does not succeed, if the Legislature blocks it, the Legislature will be sentencing healthcare in Arizona to a steady decline. That decline will blunt earnest efforts to turn our economic situation around because employers will not locate here nor expand their commitment to this State if medical coverage is so bad that it is pushing hospitals toward an untenable future.

Scottsdale, Arizona 85251-3693

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From:
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 9:14 PM
To: Coverage
Subject: support the Medicaid expansion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Governor Brewer,

I think your plan for Arizona to participate in the Medicaid expansion is a sound one.

As a health care provider in Az I have had many patients who have benefited by AHCCCS coverage and I have had patients (childless adults who other wise met the financial criteria) suffer this year because they were no longer eligible. This coverage is needed to provide basic healthcare to those who can't afford it and to keep costs affordable for us all.

Thank you for this plan.

Sincerely,

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 9:18 PM
To: Share
Subject: Arizona_Medicaid

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern:

As a practicing physician in Arizona I have had several patients (single childless adults) who could not afford to get recommended tests or medication and thus their health suffered. I hope that Arizona reinstates the AHCCCS for low income single childless adults as voted on by Arizona voters (prop 204) and expands that coverage to meet the Medicaid expansion criteria of the Affordable Healthcare Act. This reinstatement and expansion would provide needed care to many who can't afford it and would also provide payment to Arizona's hospitals. It makes ethical and financial sense.

Sincerely,

MD, MPH

From:
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2013 12:18 AM
To: Share
Subject: my input

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I hope to attend the Phoenix session. However, whether or not I can, I want to share my input. I have a close family member, a childless adult, who is an insulin dependent diabetic. He and his wife have been unemployed or underemployed for the majority of the past year. As childless adults, they could not qualify for AHCCCS, and neither had any other health insurance options. They have gone without medical care during this time, including insulin. Under the Medicaid expansion, they may qualify for AHCCCS. This could literally be a life saving change for them.

You can use this information, but I request to stay anonymous.

From:
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2013 10:28 AM
To: Coverage
Subject: Submit your comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I have been one of the lucky ones who has always had health insurance coverage throughout my working life and now I am on Medicare. I know that I would not have been able to take good care of myself if this had not been the case. Members of my family (who live in other states) have had to be helped through Medicaid and are now able to take care of themselves because of the help they received when they badly needed it. Thank goodness that now the people of Arizona will be able to get the help they need.

From:
Sent: Friday, February 22, 2013 10:19 AM
To:
Subject: FW: Keogh Health Connection Impact Stories

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From:
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2013 10:13 PM
To: Coverage Phoenix; Share
Cc:
Subject: Keogh Health Connection Impact Stories

Hello,

Per your desire to hear how health care coverage has had an impact on people served, I am sending along these real-life stories of clients of Keogh Health Connection. If you would like more stories, please let me/us know.

Regards,

<http://keoghhealth.org/>

Lisa

Lisa and her husband are veterans. They have two children. Lisa's economic situation was about to change drastically and she needed help. Lisa is pregnant and concerned about both her and the baby's health. Lisa's previous miscarriages and current gestational diabetes put her in a high risk category. Lisa previously qualified for AHCCCS when she miscarried before the current pregnancy. She was comforted by the fact she could reapply for AHCCCS with one of Keogh's outreach specialists. Thankfully Lisa and her children were approved for AHCCCS, and she can now provide her baby and her children the medical care they need.

Shelly

Shelly is a homeless single mother who struggles to keep her daughter off the streets and in school. Shelly suffers from depression and receives therapy through Magellan. She was introduced to Keogh through Urban Outreach, a homeless program in Tempe. She was relieved that she was able to apply for AHCCCS and food stamps with one of Keogh's outreach specialists, and didn't have to venture down to DES and stand in line. Time that would have interrupted her search for a job. Fortunately, Shelly and her daughter were both approved for AHCCCS and food stamps with Keogh's help.

Angie

Angie asked Keogh to help with an AHCCCS application. She previously tried to apply for AHCCCS, but was unsuccessful. The whole process was frustrating. She and her husband and three children are all U.S. citizens. Angie was very concerned because her family couldn't afford private health insurance, and were having a hard time just making ends meet. She worried about her oldest daughter who was having liver problems, and doctors were suspecting that she may have liver cancer. Needless to say Angie was relieved to receive a letter saying

that her whole family had been approved for AHCCCS. She now has peace of mind knowing that her daughter and the rest of her family have healthcare coverage.

Nancy

Nancy works in a adult ESL class at a Mesa elementary school. Nancy's husband recently lost his job, and she knew that with her small income she was not going to be able to afford private health insurance. Nancy heard about Keogh's services through a presentation her ESL class. When Nancy's financial situation changed dramatically she called Keogh to help her apply for KidsCare. Sadly after Nancy had completed her application she was told that her children would be put on a waiting list because an enrollment freeze had been placed on KidsCare just as her application was received for processing. She was frustrated because had she applied only several weeks earlier, her children could have had healthcare coverage. Nancy knew she was over income for AHCCCS and didn't know what she was going to do. Fortunately, Nancy was referred to several sliding fee scale clinics that would be accessible in case her children were ever in need of a doctor.

From:
Sent: Saturday, February 23, 2013 3:28 PM
To: Share
Subject: Accept expanded Medicaid

I want to urge the support of the expanded Medicaid in Arizona.

Regards,

Glendale, AZ

From:
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2013 9:23 AM
To: Share
Subject: Medicaid expansion

I am in favor of expanding Medicaid eligibility for the state of Arizona. I think it is the most important thing we can do this session for the health of our citizens, the health of our economy, and for the long term benefit of our state. Also, it's the right thing to do.

Emergency Medicine

From:
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2013 11:08 AM
To: Share
Subject: Mental Health Coverage

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

I am writing today to show support for our states Medicaid program AHCCCS. I work with foster children, children with mental illness and smi adults. It is getting so difficult to get our young people services they desperately need to function in society with all the budget cuts. The mental health clinics are overworked and have huge caseloads. They are unable to respond to the increasing needs of our youth. I think all the events in our nation with school shootings and public shootings is a result of our kids falling through the cracks in mental health services. I believe all of the families of these perpetrators had asked for help from their local communities. It wasn't addressed.

I have firsthand knowledge that it takes approximately 2-3 months to have my children's services start. Then the services are limited. They aren't approving special therapies due to budget cuts. I work with a very difficult population of youth. These are the kids that if they don't receive serious intervention they are at risk of the violence we have seen across our nation.

I attempted to get services for one of my kids who aged out of CPS and was declared an SMI adult. Because of the length of time to get her seen by a psychiatrist and start therapy she placed herself in a living situation that was very unhealthy. She is now a pregnant, drug addicted 18 year old. She was taken advantage of a man who was harboring AHCCCS young adults for his own profit. I spoke to CPS and APS and they were unable to take any legal action to prevent this young lady from being victimized. We tried to protect her. I haven't heard from her so I pray she is still alive.

I urge our state to take mental health seriously. Please don't use these programs to balance our budget problems. It will end up costing our state and the lives of the people in our community. I don't believe it starts with gun control. I believe it starts with the reasons these youth are unstable and addressing those needs. Many of our families don't qualify for AHCCCS anymore due to stricter guidelines. There needs to be special consideration for mentally at risk youth just like there is for adults.

I am available for further advocacy or comment.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2013 9:38 AM
To: Share
Subject: comments on Medicaid restoration

Health care is a business and economic driver in Arizona, similar to the aerospace or defense industries. The healthcare sector makes effective use of private and public funds to create jobs, support ancillary services and support the purchase of local materials. Statewide, the hospital industry is 63% larger than the hospitality industry and 37% larger than the electronics and aerospace industries combined.

Throughout the “Great Recession,” hospitals were one of the few industries that did not experience massive layoffs and largely retained or enhanced employment levels. But the continued economic downturn and the dramatic rise in the uninsured, which occurred last fiscal year (more than 140,000 people lost their insurance due to state budget cuts), has put an unsustainable strain on hospital finances from patients who need services, but are unable to pay.

Governor Brewer’s plan to restore Medicaid coverage is a sound one. Arizona voters have twice approved providing Medicaid coverage to Arizonans below federally-designated levels of poverty, and the Governor’s proposal would help fulfill the will of the voters.

There also is a clear economic argument to be made for this plan. Arizona needs to stay competitive in the region – since so many of the other western states are maximizing the Medicaid dollars, we will be at a strategic disadvantage if we do not do the same. The Governor’s plan will inject \$2 billion into our economy, keeping Arizonans’ tax dollars in Arizona and helping to maintain and create thousands of jobs in the state. The plan will also alleviate the burden of uncompensated care costs that get placed on businesses and Arizona families who are paying higher rates to compensate for uninsured patients in need of care.

We encourage business and community leaders throughout the state to support the Governor’s proposal as a cost effective way to provide insurance for more than 240,000 Arizonans and to help our economy continue to move into full recovery.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2013 3:35 PM
To: Share
Subject: Submit your story

Many think that all children with disabilities are covered under some type of public program. While our son once qualified for ALTCS, Matt is no longer medically eligible. This is a positive thing, since it means Matt is no longer at risk of needing institutional care. He received services and supports from state programs that improved his health status and his functional abilities. We celebrate this as a great return on the investment the state made in Matt's care.

Like many young adults, Matt is on a path to independence. Matt was included in public school under the IDEA, and graduated with his diploma and a 3.7 GPA. Matt anticipated and planned for community college, integrated community living, and employment opportunities.

However, Matt's disability meant he could not enroll as a full-time college student, and his disability meant working part-time. Matt is now 26, lives at home, unmarried and a childless adult. Many young adults with disabilities need medical insurance to remain healthy and employable.

Families like mine strongly support the Governor's decision to expand Medicaid eligibility. Access to healthcare supports a path toward independence for youth with disabilities who are not covered under public programs.

The Governor is keeping faith with the will of Arizonans who already approved this expansion with their votes.

I urge our state legislators to do the same.



From:
Sent: Monday, March 04, 2013 1:04 PM
To: Coverage
Subject: medicaid expansion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I strongly support expanding Medicaid through the ACA. As a physician, I see firsthand the effect on families of people's lack of access to health care due to being uninsured. A recent New England Journal of Medicine article clearly documented the morbidity and mortality associated with lack of insurance due to the rollback of Prop 204. In addition, many hospitals across the state have had major financial losses, since people without insurance still must be seen by them and are getting care at the most costly venue. Under the ACA, the federal government would pay 100% of expansion for several years and then 90% of the cost. It is clearly in our state's interest to accept the money and expand coverage to up to 250,000 people. It is a moral as well as economic imperative to do so. Thank you,

From:
Sent: Wednesday, March 06, 2013 5:48 PM
To: Share
Subject: Please share my concerns (edit for length if necessary)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

My youngest son was diagnosed with Mature B Cell Leukemia at the age of 5. He is now 14, Cancer Free. I am concerned about him being labeled as high risk by insurance companies. I have worked all my life and have thus, only been eligible for a state health plan during the 2-3 years [redacted] was in treatment. Since then, we have always been deemed ineligible due to my income. I currently make <\$35,000 a year, my husband has no income to speak of, and we have 3 children 18 or under.

When [redacted] is out on his own, he will be a working, contributing member of society and thus ineligible for a state health plan. He will also not be able to afford the expensive high-risk insurance premiums. What is he to do?

Last July, [redacted] was flown out from our community of Page, to Phoenix Children's Hospital for emergency surgery to remove two large non-cancerous tumors from his spinal cord. With insurance, the flight co-pay was over \$8,000 + another \$8,000 from both hospitals. We live paycheck to paycheck. If I can't afford these expenses, how will he, when he is no longer covered under my insurance? Is this label going to affect his attractiveness to be hired? Will credit agencies see him as a possible loan risk?

If I can not pay these medical bills, what am I going to do if this happens again? Adding to our plight, I was diagnosed with Kidney Cancer and under went surgery a year ago January, those bill were over \$10,000 after insurance.

Due to our history, are my other children going to be lumped in as high risk? What about [redacted] kids? Where does it stop? If you let it start now, how big will the elephant be 10, 20 years from now?

God gave my son a future. I want it to be as bright a future as every other child's. Thank you for your time in listening to a Mother's concerns.

Page, AZ

March 11, 2013

AHCCCS
Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Phoenix, AZ 85034

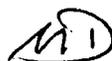
Dear Sirs,

I have had 43 years of experience providing healthcare to all socio-economic segments of the community here in Tucson. It includes 5 years of service at Pima County Hospital, 21 years with Group Health Medical Associates, and the balance in small group practice. Since my retirement 2 years ago, I have served as Medical Director at Clinica Amistad, a free clinic in South Tucson that serves patients with medical problems and who have no form of health insurance. All who serve there, including doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, registered nurses, and multiple volunteers who are working towards healthcare careers, do so without pay. The patients are not charged for services, including lab, X-Rays, Ultrasound studies and specialty consultations provided by community physicians. Our costs are supported by community donations and grants.

Since there was a restriction in AHCCCS coverage there has been a marked increase in the numbers of patients seen. The majority of them have serious medical problems, mainly diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol levels and a variety of other ailments. Our data shows that we saw as many new patients through June of 2012 as were seen in the entire year of 2011. Half of our patients are employed but lack health insurance, either because it is not provided or is too costly for them to afford. Overall, 78% of our patients report living below the poverty level. We believe that we have prevented many patients from seeking care at emergency rooms and possible hospitalization.

There is no doubt, judging from the above experience, that the expansion of Medicaid/AHCCCS would be a necessity to preclude an even larger number of Arizona citizens being left without basic healthcare protection. Operations such as ours cannot possibly fill the vacuum. Therefore, expansion of the healthcare safety net would be the humane and right thing to do. Please do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials "MI" enclosed in a circle.

From:
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 11:37 AM
To: Share
Subject: My letter

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This is my letter to Governor Brewer and the legislators --- if anyone is interested.

-----Original Message-----

Subject: Medicaid expansion in Arizona

We definitely need to support the medicaid expansion under the federal health care reform. Especially due to the recession, we need to help our citizens who can no longer afford insurance. So often now this is due to job loss totally unconnected to their personal job performance or major illness - NOT due to lack of 'moral fiber' as some radical republicans would have us believe.

For therecord, I am a moderate republican who ALWAYS votes and is sick of the far, far right stance of the republican party in this state. I am for tax increases if it goes to boost our education and care for our uninsured citizens. I am for tax increases if it is used to help child protective services in caring for our defenseless children. I am pro life but not to extremes. The Republican party believes in caring for the defenseless unborn but what about the defenseless children of child abuse, the defenseless worker who lost his/her job due to outsourcing or profit greediness, or the seriously sick person whose insurance company refuses care and moves the whole family into bankruptcy. I am not for the overreaching decreases in taxes for the large corporations that we want to have in our state. When that happens, the most needy suffer the most.

In 60 years, our family has NEVER had anyone lose their jobs or houses or medical insurance or go into bankruptcy. We were all raised with strong 'moral fiber' and work ethic. We have now had 2 job losses with only part time replacements and it looks like 2 more on the way. We have had 3 small business owners who lost their businesses and homes due to foreclosure. There have been 5 families in bankruptcy as a result of the recent depression brought on by wall street and large corporation greed.

I am sure my family story is repeated all over Arizona.

With all of this happening to your decent, hard working citizens, as a state we must provide health care.

If the Republicans in our state don't start dealing with these issues, we will vote for those Democrats who will.

From:
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 12:15 PM
To: Share
Subject: Health Care

I am a middle aged female that has lived in Arizona all my life. Have paid taxes and supported Arizona through thick and thin times. I right now need help with some health issues I need treatment so I can live and watch my grand children grow. I was cut off of AHCCCS because I don't have a young child. Well I raised my children to be productive members of this state both work and are not on any government assistance. I need help with my medical at this point in my life 55years old. I am trying to work but i need treatment for my disease and without AHCCCS I can not afford treatment, Heck I can't even afford to go see a Doctor let alone treatment. I have been healthy most of my life and now when I need help I can't get it. Please help me!

From:
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 3:32 PM
To: Share
Subject: Stories to share

My youngest sister while getting chemo at a Mcpa County clinic watched a childless woman turned away from an appointment for lack of \$95.00. I don't the lady's name that was sentenced to die quietly but I wrote this for her (and tendered my resignation):

America's
Budget cuts
Cut
Deep
No chemo for me today

My elder sister is currently receiving chemo and her only child is 40 and in a separate household. Unhealthy people don't evaporate.

Hope this finds you well. Thanks. !

From:
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 4:26 PM
To: Share
Subject: FW: Delivery Status Notification
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

From:
To:
Date: Mon, 11 Mar 2013 16:23:22 -0700
Subject: Delivery Status Notification (Failure)

This is an automatically generated Delivery Status Notification.

Delivery to the following recipients failed.

share@azachss.gov

To: share@azachss.gov
Subject: My wife
Date: Mon, 11 Mar 2013 19:23:22 -0400

Dear Government,

My wife is 62 and has worked hard all her life. Her efforts to work and pay taxes are on record. She has the following medical issues. 5 stents.....extreme curvature in her spine..Lupus...Shogrens...and teeth that need much repair. I have 5 herinated discs...torn rotator cuff...hep C. Please for Gods sake help us. We cannot get care. We cannot afford care that we really need to live even slightly comfortably. Please help her at least.

From:
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2013 9:26 AM
To: Share
Subject: My note to Governor Brewer in support of Medicaid Expansion

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thank you, Governor Brewer, for working with the business and healthcare communities to design a remedy for the burgeoning healthcare crisis in our state. I applaud your leadership. This is an outstanding proposal for Arizona. I have sent notice to my representatives that I am in agreement with your plans. As a registered Independent I want you to know that you have my full support on this issue.

From: !
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2013 10:42 AM
To: Share
Subject: Ahcccs needs expansion!

I will be incapacitated without ahcccs, I have a chronic severe migraine problem that without my meds to control them, I will never be able to work or even function at home...I don't qualify for disability yet, as my meds are controlling my migraines but without ahcccs I will end up on disability, and unemployed forever thus having to resort to emergency rooms for the pain, unable to pay my bills back...A CATCH 22 .

I was deemed uninsurable due to this, thus labeled with a pre-existing condition un able to get private insurance, and now unable to get a job in todays market as I can't afford the employer insurance's on the minimum wages offered to me, and non of them care about the fact that if I earn to much with them then ahcccs will drop me, another catch 22!

I'm sailing on Winged Victory (written for Governor Jan Brewer)

By Carrie Carson*

Praising our First Lady

The scolding hand taken to task

Now acts as He does ask

With kindness towards those young and ill

Winds of change bear good will

On tens of thousands nameless faces

Hope now glimmers through her graces

*Carrie's youngest sister has neuropathy from chemo treatments for breast cancer and cannot return to work. She is not eligible for AHCCCS because her disability puts her just over income and would likely benefit from the Governor's Medicaid Coverage Plan. Carrie's elder sister also has breast cancer and is currently receiving chemo treatments under the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program.

Carrie wrote this poem following Governor Brewer's State of the State announcing her Medicaid Coverage Plan.

From: S
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2013 4:56 PM
To: Share
Subject: my story

Hello,

I am both a high earning tax payer and run a multimillion dollar business throughout Maricopa County. I come from a divorced household growing up. My mother kicked me out of my home when I was barely 16 and she moved out of state. I completed the rest of high school on my own and then applied for college. If it were not for governmental assistance and student loans, I would not have made it. I was on Food Stamps, AHCCCS, and Federal Student Loans and Pell Grants for a few years, totaling 2.6 years.

That was an incredibly smart business decision for the state of Arizona, because I pay more taxes in one year with my income than the state paid out during my struggling years. I do not begrudge taxes and I do not want them reduced if it means that social programs will be reduced. I also run a business and we offer health coverage to my staff, we will continue to pay for the healthcare even if full healthcare reform occurs within Arizona. Arizona should have healthcare insurance that covers every person who earns below 133% FPL for free and ideally should cover the fees up to about 170% FPL. I know how hard it is to make a living and a person should not have to choose between food on the table, a roof over their heads or health coverage. Not everyone has family they can depend on or people to barrow money or lend support. I did not have it and it was not due to something within my control; my parents were divorced and my mother mentally ill.

From:
Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2013 10:01 AM
To: Share
Subject: Yes for expansion, my children's lives are at stake!

My name is [REDACTED]. My sons are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Both boys have severe hemophilia A. It means they have less than 1% blood clotting levels and they spontaneously bleed into their joints, muscles and soft tissues. It's a very painful, lifelong disease. There is no cure and medications are currently \$2,300 a box and it takes two boxes per shot. Shots are given three times a week for life. Each child. Both boys suffer from target bleeds that have already damaged their knees, ankles and elbows. Clotting injections are the ONLY thing clotting my children's blood. Without them, they suffer and eventually die, depending on the site.

My husband, [REDACTED], suffered a massive stroke at the age of 22 due to an enlarged heart caused by a random unknown virus. It paralyzed his whole right side and took his speech. Eventually he was give a heart transplant by the state of Utah. Sadly he passed away seven years ago, leaving me alone in this battle.

As it stands now, my sons are 16 and 18. My 18 year old, [REDACTED], cannot move from my home and branch out into independence because the second he leaves my home he can no longer clot his blood without Medicaid. He's a full time high school student so is not working yet at this time, although he's been applying for over a year and a half.

When I contacted D.E.S to discuss options for my young adult, I was told there is zero help for "childless adults". While I understand the logic here, I also know that not everyone can fit into a cookie cutter system. I urge you to recognize that certain life threatening conditions require that people need an extra bit of help till they can mature a little more and establish themselves. An environment that has adequate affordable health care.

When I asked D.E.S about what my child can possibly do to still get clotting injections and try to be independent, I was told, and I quote verbatim, "Unless your sons get someone pregnant, they won't be able to obtain any clotting medicine once they leave your home." Astonished I asked for her full name and said I wanted to quote her, she declined, for obvious reasons

From:
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2013 11:27 AM
To: Share
Subject: Submit your story

I would like to know how you could deny me my health insurance when I've been getting it for years and years? I was getting SSI benefits and it stopped and I was told to apply for my ahcccs through the state and I did and you said: NO cuz I have no kids and I'm not 65 yet! BULL!!!

I have: Fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, spinal stenosis, occipital neuralgia, 5 buldging disks, an enlarged heart and more. I NEED MY MEDICAL!!!! I'm not some freeloader milking the state.

Please, please help me!!!

From:
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2013 9:09 AM
To: Share
Subject: FW: Our statement in support of AHCCCS

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From:
Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 5:44 PM

Subject: Our statement in support of AHCCCS

We signed in supportive on the Request to Speak System:

AHCCCS forms an important cornerstone for children's health in Arizona. Half of its enrollees are children. Since its creation 30 years ago, AHCCCS has had among the highest quality and lowest costs of any state Medicaid system. Using a "managed competition" model that partners with private health plans, AHCCCS has wide participation among Arizona doctors. Over 90% of enrollees say they would refer AHCCCS coverage to a friend or family member. AHCCCS also supports high quality jobs in Arizona's hospitals and medical practices.

From:
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2013 3:48 PM
To: Share
Cc:
Subject: MY AHCCCS STORY

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN;

FIRST OF ALL, LET ME SAY THAT I AM 63 YRS. OLD, AND HAVE WORKED ALL MY LIFE IN THE HEALTHCARE ARENA, WELL OVER 40+ YEARS, AND HAD MADE A DECENT LIVING THOUGH I'VE NEVER BEEN A RICH PERSON, NEVER OWNED MY OWN HOME, AND THE MOST I EVER HAD IN MY SAVINGS WAS ABOUT \$25,000.

AFTER HAVING WORKED AS AN RN, SPECIALIZING IN MENTAL HEALTH, I WAS WORKING IN AN ACUTE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY AROUND 2008. I WAS GETTING TO THE POINT WHERE I WAS QUITE "BURNED OUT" THO I DIDN'T FULLY REALIZE TO WHAT EXTENT TILL AROUND APRIL OF THAT YEAR. ALSO, I HAD A NUMBER OF CLOSE FAMILY DEATHS BETWEEN 2005-2008, AS WELL AS HAVING GONE THRU SOME ACUTE RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS STEMMING FROM AN EARLIER SEVERE BOUT WITH VALLEY FEVER BACK AROUND 1995. BETWEEN THE GRIEF OF THE LOSS OF ALL MY FAMILY MEMBERS ON MY FATHER'S SIDE, INCLUDING HIM, AND THE PHYSICAL CHALLENGES IN RECOVERING FROM THE ACUTE ILLNESSES, ADDED TO THE BURNOUT, I WAS HAVING A HARD TIME BEING ABLE TO WORK AND FUNCTION UP TO MY NORMAL LEVEL.

THUS IT WAS THAT I ENTERED THE DES SYSTEM, SEEKING AND OBTAINING AHCCCS FOLLOWING A BIKE ACCIDENT; STARTED TO RECEIVE EBT ASSITANCE; AND INTERMITTENTLY GETTING UNEMPLOYMENT HELP AFTER ALL MY "SAVINGS" HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED. I EVEN HAD TO SELL MY VEHICLE TO AVOID WORSE CREDIT. IT HAS BEEN A VERY TOUGH TIME IN MY LIFE DURING THE YEARS FROM 2008-2012 APPROXIMATELY.

I WAS STARTING TO RECOVER, FEELING SOMEWHAT BETTER AND STRONGER, AND EVEN HAD SOME WORK, AND WAS HEALING FROM ALL MY "TRAUMAS", THOUGH I WAS STILL FEELING A LITTLE MORE TIRED THAN I NORMALLY FELT! I WENT TO MY MD, DID LAB WORK, AND FOUND THAT MY LYMPHOCYTES WERE QUITE HIGH, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE! HE REFERED ME TO A HEMATOLOGIST WHO DIAGNOSED ME WITH INDOLENT LYMPHONA IN JULY OF 2011. I WAS STUNNED, AGAIN, THOUGH MY DOCTOR DID EXPLAIN THAT THIS WAS MOST LIKELY A TYPE OF LYMPHOMA THAT WAS USUALLY SLOW IN DEVELOPMENT, AND I MIGHT BE ABLE TO LIVE OUT MY FULL NORMAL ADULT LIFE SPAN, WE HOPE?! SHORTLY AFTER THIS, I LOST MY AHCCCS; BEGAN RECEIVING VERY LITTLE EBT HELP, ALL DO TO A "SHORT" STINT OF SOME WORK.

DUE TO ALL THESE FACTORS, I DECIDED TO TAKE MY SOCIAL SECURITY RETIREMENT EARLY, AT AGE 62, AS I NEED AT LEAST "SOME" MONEY TO HELP ME PAY BILLS AND SURVIVE. I'M ONLY NOW RECEIVING \$1189.00 PER MONTH, MY ONLY INCOME WHICH BARELY COVERS ALL MY COSTS OF LIVING RATHER BAREBONED. NO MEDICAL INSURANCE, CAN'T AFFORD IT; NO EBT HELP; NO UTILITY HELP; AND IF IT WASN'T FOR A TRULY "GOOD" FRIEND WHO HAS BEEN HELPING ME AS BEST SHE CAN WITH SOME FINANCIAL HELP, I'D PROBABLY BE HOMELESS, OR WORSE!

MY MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND OVERALL PHYSICAL CONDITION HAS IMPROVED TO A GREAT EXTENT, AND I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A REALISTIC, BUT POSITIVE PERSON, SO I AM ENJOYING AND AM GRATEFUL FOR EVERY DAY, AND ALL THE THINGS I CAN ENJOY IN IT! I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND WORK YET THAT WOULD NOT "DRAIN" ME FURTHER, BUT AM STILL LOOKING, HOPEFUL, AND TRYING TO CREATE WORK I COULD ENJOY, EVEN LOVE. MEANWHILE THOUGH, I PAY FOR THE MEDS, VISITS TO MY DOCTOR EVERY 6 MONTHS, ETC. AND COULD CERTAINLY USE THE HELP THAT AHCCCS WOULD AFFORD ME, NOT TO MENTION SOME DENTAL CARE, WHICH I BADLY NEED!

I AM IN FULL SUPPORT OF GOV. BREWER'S PLAN TO RE-ESTABLISH AHCCCS TO INCLUDE SINGLE, NON-PARENTAL PEOPLE, LIKE ME, AND DO HOPE THAT SHE EXPANDS IT TO COVER DENTAL, ETC.

From:
Sent: Friday, April 26, 2013 3:18 PM
To: Share
Subject: NO FEDERAL FUNDING would be available after 12/31/13 to maintain coverage for Childless Adults under a freeze.

I am very concerned about the inability to maintain coverage for Childless Adults. As a nurse for over 35 years, I must admit I've seen "stupid" decisions based on shortsighted politicians. Pay now or Pay later. If we never plan for the care of those who most often need it, they end up in our emergency rooms, utilizing critical resources, with profound healthcare problems that would have been prevented if someone just realized that there is a better way.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail (including any attachments) is considered confidential, and any unauthorized disclosure or other use is prohibited. If you've received this transmission by mistake, please return with an e-mail message and then delete. Thank You

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From:
Sent: Friday, April 26, 2013 4:24 PM
To: Share
Subject: No insurance for childless adults? Unthinkable!

I'm a childless adult who deals with multiple medical issues, including chronic pain. Because of my health insurance, I can afford treatment from my PCP, orthopedist, endocrinologist, neurologist, chiropractor, rheumatologist, and physical therapist—not to mention my psychiatrist and counselor, who help me with the mental challenges of living with chronic pain. My treatment has been literally life-changing, and possibly life-saving. I've been in pain for six years now, but my life is full and happy, and I never would have been able to achieve that without the tremendous support from my medical team--which, in turn, I'd never have been able to afford out of pocket. Please consider the large number of childless adults, including the homeless and near-homeless, dealing with complex medical and behavioral health issues. Consider the costs of covering emergency room visits to substitute for primary care. Regardless of federal matching funds, keeping AHCCCS for childless adults makes sense financially and ethically.

From:
Sent: Friday, April 26, 2013 8:47 PM
To: Share
Subject: Health care coverage

I have not had insurance coverage for 3 years now. I need medication for Hep C and am unable to afford it. Without treatment I will just keep getting sicker and die, with treatment I have a chance to watch my grand kids grow and still be a productive member of this great state of Arizona of which I was born and raised. I am in support of the Governor's plan. Please help me. thank you,

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2013 9:30 AM
To: Share
Subject: medicaid

I support Medicaid coverage for childless adults. Many have chronic diseases that require ongoing care. Medications are too expensive for these people to purchase. Please help them.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, May 01, 2013 9:55 AM
To: Coverage
Subject: Submit your comments

As a hospital RN I want to add my support for ensuring AHCCCS coverage for those in our communities who need it the most.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, May 01, 2013 11:13 AM
To: Share
Subject: no insurance

Number 2

This is the second time I have written something regarding being a childless adult in Arizona. First, I want all of you to know that I do not like being dependent on the State for insurance but my situation continues to hamper me so I turned to the State for help. I am a 54 year old childless adult and when I HAD coverage I never used it. Now that I have no coverage I have had to struggle through difficult health issues with NO help at all.

First---I have asthma. When I had health coverage I was living where my asthma rarely bothered me. But I wound up living in the west valley. Have you looked outside this spring? The desert has sprung to life after a soaking rain a couple of months or so ago. Things have grown where there was nothing. Everything seems to be blooming and pollinating. Ask any allergy sufferer about it. Those of us with asthma are paying the price as well. I have no insurance to get the inhalers or oral meds I need to be able to breathe easily. I've had to curtail my activities to watching a lot of TV because I must remain quiet in order to breathe.

Second---I have ongoing problems with my feet now and they need to be treated. But again I cannot do one thing about it. I'm fairly certain that if I got treatment for my feet, it wouldn't involve that much but if they continue to go untreated.....who knows? I could wind up in the hospital having very expensive treatments instead of a couple trips to the doctor and a prescription.

Third---For the first time in my life, I got a boil. Not some little pimple thing.....No, I got one the size of a golf ball. I'm now three weeks into trying to heal it with home remedies. Many people do this all the time so you may be thinking its no big deal. I was exposed to MRSA in late 2010 to the point that two medical professionals told me that I more than likely have MRSA colonized on my skin and probably always will. I have to treat any open wound, even tiny ones as if they are major lacerations. When seeking treatment, I have to tell any health care person that I was exposed to MRSA.....for the rest of my life.

The boil situation was complicated because I was allergic to every adhesive tape we tried and now I have a ton of rashes all over my arm from the tape. So here I am not having any idea of I got MRSA fired up in any of my 'wounds.' Another person who was involved with caring for the same MRSA patient that I was involved with; was bitten by a brown recluse and MRSA was found in the bite wound. So the threat is real. And I spent far more time with the original MRSA patient helping with their personal care and changing wound dressings at home for them than the spider bite victim did. Again the threat is real.

I need to have my medical situations attended to so I can look for work and be able to be there everyday when I finally find a job. I need help and just because I chose to remain single and not have children I should NOT be penalized for that decision. I have been in DES offices in the waiting area and heard women say they deliberately had a baby so they could get help. So now you have TWO persons getting help instead of one. All I need is some help here. I would be most happy to be completely dependent on myself if I could. But right now I need the health insurance that was available to me in the past to be reinstated so my problems will not escalate into major problems that will land me in the hospital or if no hospital will take me.....die.

DO THE RIGHT THING PEOPLE.....TAKE CARE OF THE PEOPLE.....THE PEOPLE WHO VOTE FOR YOU!

From:
Seht: Thursday, May 02, 2013 1:36 PM
To: Share
Subject: Story

Hello,

I work with cancer patients and would like to share a story of one of our adult patients who lost his AHCCCS medical benefits in June 2012 when his youngest daughter turned 18. This man had been on disability for about a year prior due to a diagnosis of Stage IV malignant melanoma. He was being successfully treated, meaning he was receiving chemotherapy and the disease was not progressing. Once he was released from AHCCCS in June 2012 he was fortunate to receive charity care from our hospital which covered 80% of his medical bills. However as of Oct 2012 he had an outstanding balance of \$10,000 - his 20% share. That same month, while sitting in an exam room with his Dr. and with the presence of his 18 y/o daughter and his mother, made the difficult decision to stop treatment because he could not conceive of increasing that \$10K debt. His disability Medicare benefits would start in April 2013 and he said he would start treatment again at that time. Myself and his social worker were present and if I could have transported Jan Brewer to that room in that moment, I would have. This heart breaking scenario unfolded. The cruelty and injustice was hardly comprehensible. This man and his family were surrounded by world class cancer researchers and cutting edge treatment - just down the hall and up the stairs. There is no doubt his disease would progress by the time April 1st 2013 rolled around very likely shortening his life, quite possibly by years.

This patient had 2 emergency hospital admissions in Feb and again in late March just days before his Medicare would kick in. He and his family are sinking in medical expense debt but incredibly their resilience is intact and the 18 y/o daughter is the very face of courage as she watches her father deteriorate at the hands of a system well equipped to treat him but completely inaccessible.

He will learn to what extent his disease has progressed next week. He tells me that this is all he wants to know and that he knows he will die from this disease and with the likelihood of significant advance, he wants to forego additional palliative treatment so that he may enjoy the time he has left with his family.

It is very possible that he could live a quality life for many, many years despite his incurable disease. Our system failed this man and his family and next week will reveal just how much.

From:
Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2013 7:33 PM
To: Share
Subject: Healthcare coverage for childless adults

I help treat seriously mentally ill adults who have committed murder, child neglect and attempted suicide every day. Many of my childless patients are former drug addicts who have permanent damage (e.g. schizophrenia, congestive heart failure) and cannot live without public assistance. I fear the moment these "childless individuals" are left without health insurance we will be damned as a society. I cannot see how they will be able to survive without their medication and close follow up. What will a schizophrenic do without his/her medication? Will they go out and shoot someone when a voice encouraging to do so now emerges due to lack of medication? Will I be forced to watch my congestive heart failure patients and diabetes slowly be taken over by their disease states and die? Will emergency rooms in Tucson we even more congested and eventually close due to lack of funding? I have already watch these things happen to other human beings when the state of Arizona pulled funding for illegal immigrants. Must I watch this happen to U.S. citizens?

From:
Sent: Friday, May 03, 2013 2:13 PM
To: Share
Subject: it matters

Personal story:

My son was recently involved in an accident; this was not planned. He was hospitalized for almost a full week, luckily he has recovered from the accident. Doctors say he was very lucky to sustain the types of injuries he had. Follow up was critical and we had attended many follow up appts from July through February 2013 and traveled 240 miles round trip. I am a single parent with five children, my pay is not great, feeding clothing my family etc. is difficult at times. The travel put a strain on my budget. Luckily my son had AHCCCS to help pay for the costs. He was asked to pay \$25.00 at one time which I immediately paid but later the check was returned to me as paid in full he does not have a job). Without AHCCCS I would not be able to afford the payment or billing for his immediate and short term care. Insurance costs are high and as it stands currently, I live in an area where the nearest private clinic or health care facility is 70 miles away. (wear and tear on my vehicle, gas, meals and time to travel). WE have an Indian Health facility but have limited services here.

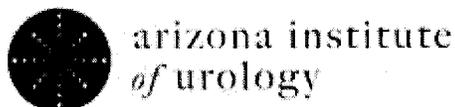
Again, this accident was not a planned event and we are thankful that AHCCCS was available to help pay for my sons accident. He is an adult and has no children. Jobs are scarce on the Hopi reservation.

From:
Sent: Monday, May 06, 2013 10:29 AM
To: Share
Subject: We support Governor Brewer's Restoration Plan

As healthcare professionals we are faced with more and sicker patients. Patients are not getting the preventative healthcare that they need. We see more and more patients using the emergency room as their primary care provider because they cannot afford healthcare. They know they will not be turned away from the emergency room. This only services to drive up costs. It is a proven fact that when preventative healthcare is provided utilization of high cost medical inpatient stays and costly procedures can be avoided. Healthcare provided in an outpatient setting, such as a doctor's office or healthcare clinic, is a lot less costly that providing those same services in the emergency room or an inpatient setting.

Adopting the Governor's Medicaid restoration package is the only way to alleviate the strain being placed on medical facilities and their staffs. This is not a partisan issue. Sickness and injury are not things that effect just Democrats or Republicans, the rich or the poor.

Please do not play politics with the health and well-being of our patients, families and friends. Please support the Governor's Medicaid restoration package today. This is the only way to alleviate the strain our doctors and nurses are facing today.



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From:
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2013 4:15 PM
To: Share
Subject: The Impact of no medical coverage

On March 26, 2013 I was stopped at a red light at a pedestrian crossing. I was rear ended by a larger vehicle (which caused nearly \$8,000 damage to the vehicle I was in). I was taken on a backboard with a cervical collar to the emergency room. Tests were run on my skull and brain. Thankfully I had insurance. I worked full time at a local manufacturing company as a buyer. I followed up with my primary care physician the following day and at that time couldn't feel much of my left hand, had a headache equivalent to a migraine that wouldn't go away and could not move my left arm very well nor did I have a normal gait. He referred me to a clinic that worked on rehabing my spine.

I was unable to sit, stand or even lay down for more than 30 minutes at a time without adjusting, changing my position and being miserable and in horrible pain unless I took the pain medication and muscles relaxers prescribed. Two weeks into treatment and I was just beginning to feel my left hand again and could move my head more than a tiny bit. I was placed on FMLA by my employer after exhausting my PTO and "floating holidays".

On April 26, 2013 I was laid off. With that comes the lack of medical insurance unless of course, you can pay the \$700 a month for COBRA. Well, considering unemployment is only \$240 a week, (and that is being decreased by 16% next month) how is one supposed to afford COBRA premiums plus co-pays of \$30 per doctor visit and a minimum of \$20 per prescription? That leaves me a choice of rent and utilities like electricity to apply for jobs and water so I can be clean for interviews or Health Care.

I have a medical illness that requires daily medicine. With insurance it costs \$50 a month, without it costs nearly \$400. That doesn't include the medicine required to control asthma or high blood pressure.

I am dumbfounded that a person who is working, paying for their own medical and through no fault of their own finds themselves without a job can't get medical coverage. It leads to a perpetual vicious cycle. Without medication I can't work, without work I can't get medication. I thought that was what the AHCCCS was set up to assist with...I thought the original intent of "Welfare" was for the working "man" who suddenly found their-self in dire straits. I am not sure how this equates to fairness or just when a person who has worked for years and paid for those on welfare and the healthcare of others through taxes, suddenly can't rely on that same system.

How does a taxpayer win?

Sincerely,

Subject:

Need Info On medical and prescription

From:

Sent: Monday, May 20, 2013 12:07 PM

To: Public Input

Subject: Need Info On medical and prescription

My Name is _____ and I am 64.

I have lost my job. I was on Long term disability from work for a year now. The company I worked for had to make a Company decision to replace my job on May 6. This decision was made due to I can not work 8 hr days and that I have limitations on what I can do. I will be losing my medical insurance on June 2.

There is some medicines that I need due to my conditions. I have COPD and asthma along with bronchitis. Along with a few of the other medications I take.

I also have been off work due to Back problems and I had my left shoulder replacement last Oct. 1 2012. I only need help with paying for my medications for a short period of time. This will be temporary since I will be 65 in December of this year and I can go on social security to help me pay for my medications.

Thanks

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject: FW: Impact of Health Care Coverage

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject: Re: Impact of Health Care Coverage

Pituitary Brain Tumor:

I have an excruciatingly painful 2.5 cm pituitary brain tumor. I don't have health insurance because I just graduated from college in December and can't get a job until this tumor is surgically removed. Even though I am below poverty level, AHCCS Health denied me because I am single, without children. I have absolutely no way to pay for the highly specialized medical treatment I need without insurance or financial assistance. My only hope of getting the healthcare I need is to qualify as a charity case now that AHCCCS Health is no longer accepting applicants that are single, without children.

I am 38 now and was diagnosed with cervical cancer at 36. I worked in the food industry for over 14 years and they didn't provide health insurance. Because I had no insurance I didn't go for my yearly exams. I had some irregular health issues so I went to the county hospital and they ran some test. That is when I found out I have cervical cancer. I never had any other symptoms so it never dawned on me to get checked. Once I found out about the cancer, I had applied for AHCCCS but was denied because I have no children. I had no other options for care and my doctor told me about charity care at St. Joseph'. I have been receiving care through them since 2010. I needed a surgery but the charity care had run out of funds and I still didn't qualify for AHCCCS. My husband happened to get a job that offered health benefits, so I was able to get the surgery. He was later laid off, so I lost health coverage again. At this point I didn't qualify for pre-existing insurance because you have to be without insurance for 6 months...I applied for AHCCCS but again was denied.

Please help! Just because we don't have children doesn't mean we don't need help. I have worked my entire life and now am in a situation to where I cannot get any help when I need it the most.

From:
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2013 3:55 PM
To: Share
Subject: Submit your story

My name is _____ and I am an electrician by trade. Due to the long economic down turn I have become homeless and unemployed. About two months ago I lifted a box to help a friend and got a hernia. I can not look for work and can not do anything, It is painful and has dropped into my scrotum.

I went to John C Lincoln a non profit hospital and told them I had no insurance, after many weeks of no return of phone calls to agencies for help. I told them I didn't have insurance and that I didn't want to create a bill I could not pay. I told the same thing to every person I saw including the Dr. They assured me it was OK. The Dr. then told me if I could get the hernia to reduce by pushing it up it was not considered an emergency and I could not be helped without insurance. Then comes the billing girl which told me my 10 minute consultation and blood pressure check would cost me \$5000.00.

I asked to talk to a social worker that explained to me that because I had no children I could not be helped.

So here I am, the building starting to improve and I can't get off the couch. My income for the last 6 months was less than \$2000.00. I don't know how I would eat if it was not for friends.

I have paid taxes all my working life and at 55 years old feel discriminated against and betrayed when the only time I have ever asked for help from the government I can't get any.

Sad and desperate,

From:
Sent: Saturday, June 01, 2013 6:11 PM
To: Share
Subject: my story

I was 26 when my accident occurred (June, 2012), working part-time and going to school full-time. I was unable to afford insurance (starving student) and didn't qualify for AHCCCS because I am a single adult with no children. I was in an accident that broke my neck and caused severe nerve damage that has affected the use of my left arm. I was in ICU and had to have an emergency ACDF. My medical bills are through the roof! Even with the discounts, my medical expenses are beyond what I will ever be able to pay back.

The worst part at this point isn't the bills, it's the fact that I need more tests and possibly another surgery to see what it is I am dealing with, which I haven't been able to get because of the cost. The medication that gives the most relief for my chronic pain is over \$200 a month, which, again, I don't buy because I can't afford it. My family has helped out so I can continue with physical therapy, but it is costly. I am unable to work, and can't do much with school because of my physical issues. I was working at getting my bachelors in nursing, but I cannot do the job if I don't get better and I can't get better if I don't have some help. Yes, I applied for disability, but like everything else, it is a waiting game. As I wait to see which might come through first, I am worse off. Every day is a step backward at regaining what was lost with my nerves alone. I could be a productive member of society, but I can't if I continue to get worse.

There are so many other people out there that have it worse than me. I can only imagine what that must feel like. We need help.

From:
Sent: Monday, July 01, 2013 4:16 PM
To: Share
Subject: my story of being uninsured

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

My name is

This is what has happened to my life since the waiver and loss of my AHCCCS coverage, and continued denial to this program as well as being denied SSDI and all other related programs.

In 2006 I was unemployed and had been since 2003 because I had developed osteoarthritis and it had affected my right hip so severely that i almost could not walk anymore. I applied for AHCCCS when it became apparent that I could not return to work or be hired in my condition.

On AHCCCS I was able to go for an exam with a PCP who referred me to an osteopathic surgeon.

of AZ Orthopedic Pain and Fracture Surgeons. He looked at the x rays and told me if I did not get a full right hip replacement my femur would snap off inside me. There was no cartilage left and the top of the bone was covered in cysts that had ruptured and the bone was becoming brittle. He requested approval for immediate surgery through my provider which was "Mercy Care". They approved it and within a week I had the procedure. I recovered fairly well and was finally able to walk more normally although the 3 years it took while I was uninsured and walked progressively worse had taken their toll and left me with some bad back problems. I had a pinched nerve in my lower back and one foot was noticeably deformed by the pressure of coming down on it with more of my weight than the other since i preferred my left due to the increasing pain before the operation as the hip degenerated.

I went back to work as soon as I was done with the physical rehab. Because my income increased i was no longer illegible for continued AHCCCS.

The company I worked for was small family owned and did not offer any health care. My salary did not leave room in our budget for independent insurance.

I was laid off in 2010 when the economy collapsed with the housing market. The company I had been working for was a courier company that dealt mostly in real estate documents. A bad housing market meant cutbacks to their staff. while we were struggling to right ourselves my husband became very ill. he was on AHCCCS and was told he needed to retire early due to degenerative disc disease, severe osteo-arthritis in all sectors of his back. Bone spurring and spondylitis causing him severe pain and headaches compounded by 3 kidney stones one unusually large stone had embedded itself in the

It is ridiculous and a waste of funds allowing me to be permanently crippled by not funding the procedure I need to maintain my independence.

I look back on my choice to move here to Arizona back in 1991 with great regret. I am severely depressed and even though I am only 52 I feel like my life is over. I wish the states and the federal government would stop bickering over budgets and monies promised before it leaves a permanent mark on my life. I worked much of my adult life like anyone else yet I am to have no pleasant retirement or golden years ahead. Caught in a catch 22 of sorts I feel that I am part group of people that those in an economic class above me have decided are dead weight on society and the message is go away stop making so much noise and die quietly you are not worthy of any more of a life than this.

shame on Arizona

shame on the United States

I am but a small example of the people out there suffering because money has become more important than people.

Phoenix AZ 85020

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