



Autism Society Ohio

March 14, 2025

The Autism Society of Ohio is a coalition of affiliates of the Autism Society of America in Ohio, including Autism Society Central Ohio, Autism Society of Dayton, Autism Society of Greater Akron, Autism Society of Greater Cleveland, Autism Society Mahoning Valley and Autism Society Northwest Ohio.

We are reaching out to express our concern regarding potential changes to Medicaid in the ongoing reconciliation discussions. The House Reconciliation instructions propose cuts of at least \$880 billion to the Energy and Commerce Committee's jurisdiction. Since this committee primarily oversees Medicaid and Medicare, we are concerned that cuts to Medicaid, which plays a vital role for individuals with disabilities, could unintentionally harm many in our community, including those with Autism.

In Ohio, Medicaid is a lifeline for individuals with Autism, supporting critical services such as early intervention, K-12 school programs, healthcare access, and home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers. These waivers enable individuals to live and contribute to their communities, which is a core value that we know resonates with you and many of your colleagues. However, as these waivers are optional, any federal cuts could reduce access to these services, making it harder for individuals to live independently and thrive within their communities.

Additionally, we are concerned about the ongoing discussions regarding Medicaid work requirements. While many working-age adults enrolled in Medicaid are already employed, some individuals—especially those with Autism—face barriers to employment, including higher rates of underemployment and unemployment. Many others are caregivers or individuals with disabilities who require additional support to find and maintain meaningful work. Introducing work requirements for these individuals could create unnecessary hardship, and the exemption processes—often complex and difficult to navigate—could further burden states and individuals alike.

As advocates for individuals with Autism across Ohio, we urge you to consider the unique needs of this community when making decisions about Medicaid. We know that the goals of reducing government spending and promoting personal independence are priorities that you hold dear. We are hopeful that these principles can align with supporting those who rely on Medicaid to live fulfilling lives and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

We greatly appreciate your leadership and advocacy on behalf of Ohio's communities and hope that you will join us in protecting Medicaid for those with Autism and other disabilities. Thank you for your continued support and for considering the impact that any cuts or changes to Medicaid could have on these vulnerable individuals and families.

Very truly yours,
Kathi J. Machle, President
Autism Society of Ohio