

Educating Elected Officials on Medicaid Cuts

Talking Points for Outreach and Advocacy

This form is OPCA's guidance on what points to highlight when speaking with decision makers about the impact of HR.1. Additionally, this document highlights specific asks of elected officials, sorted into state and federal level asks, which are in alignment with OPCA's advocacy strategy. The goal is to deliver consistent throughlines in messaging to lawmakers in order to amplify the needs and concerns of Oregon health centers.

I. Impacts on your Health Center and Community

- a. Educate lawmakers on the federal mandate for FQHCs to serve all individuals in their catchment area, regardless of ability to pay.
- b. Inform key decision-makers that prior to the cuts outlined in H.R. 1, experts estimated that health center costs would exceed revenues, requiring additional investments from the federal or state government (The Commonwealth Fund).
- c. Educate lawmakers on how Medicaid is one of the primary sources of revenue for FQHCs.
- d. Demonstrate to lawmakers the funding deficit that transitioning patients from full OHP benefits to the HOP plan will cause for FQHCs.
- e. Illustrate, with examples, how Medicaid cuts will impact health center services and patients. Be sure to highlight which of your health center's services are most at risk of reduction or cessation.

Sample Statement: There are X Medicaid lives served by [CHC] in our district. A decline in Medicaid coverage results in a drastic increase in uncompensated care. Without commensurate increases to other funding sources to cover the costs of increased uninsured patients, the stability of the FQHCs throughout Oregon is threatened. To compensate for the loss in funds, our health center may need to...

II. Impact on Public Health

- a. Communicate to lawmakers that uninsured people typically do not access preventive health care services.
- b. Paint the picture that FQHCs are an integral component in reducing Oregon's overall health care spending. Link back to the fact that primary care is far cheaper in the long run.

Sample Statement: Adults who are uninsured are four times more likely than adults with insurance to report not having a usual source of care, which is critical for preventative care and treating chronic conditions ([Kaiser Family Foundation](#)). Without insurance, patients often end up delaying care until their conditions have worsened, which results in increased costs to the healthcare system to properly treat these individuals.

III. Impact on Local Economies

- a. Underscore how Medicaid cuts may impact your health center's ability to hire, retain, or recruit additional staff.
 - i. If you have current vacancies that you have not been able to fill due to budget constraints, provide these statistics.
 - ii. If you are in a rural or frontier area particularly, provide any historical context you may have that alludes to how devastating layoffs have been for your local communities.

IV. Potential Asks at State-Level

- a. Advocate for reducing the administrative burden placed on health centers by the various reporting requirements.
 - i. Highlight the FTE you have allocated to managing reporting requirements and demonstrate how that time could be used more efficiently in your organization.
- b. Advocate for the state partnering with FQHCs to keep as many folks insured as possible.
 - i. Investing in outreach and enrollment FTE at health centers
 - ii. Low barriers for eligibility checks + work reporting requirements
- c. Advocate for funding to increase both FQHC capacity and ability to expand operations so that health centers can help treat the influx of uninsured patients.

Sample Statement: If the state's goal is to keep as many eligible patients enrolled in Medicaid as possible, partnering with FQHCs will be essential. Health centers not only serve large Medicaid populations but also act as pillars in their communities. Investing in strategies that embed Outreach and Enrollment staff at the point of care will help ensure more Oregonians remain covered.

V. Potential Asks at Federal Level

- a. Ensure that lawmakers understand the impacts H.R 1 will have on health center funding.
 - i. Educate lawmakers about the importance of protecting and strengthening health center funding amid the financial precariousness caused by proposed Medicaid cuts.
- b. Refrain from making requests related to clawing back or repealing portions of HR.1.
 - i. There is no political appetite to restructure key tenants of the bill. It will be more advantageous to focus on different approaches to mitigate harm that will be caused by Medicaid cuts.
- c. Ensure that lawmakers understand that cuts to Medicaid coverage will threaten the stability of FQHCs throughout Oregon.
 - i. Inform lawmakers that it is imperative to protect and invest more in discretionary and mandatory funding for health centers.
 - ii. Make a case for 340B program protections and reforms as an approach to stabilize health center funding.
 - 1. At the federal level, the SUSTAIN Act has been the best piece of legislation proposed so far.

Sample Statement: Health centers operate on a thin financial margin and cuts to Medicaid, without commensurate increases to other funding sources, like federal discretionary and mandatory funding, will threaten the stability of the health center program.