



Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Montana Waiver for Additional Services and Populations (WASP)
Demonstration Program

~~July 2, 2021~~ **September 3, 2021**

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I.	HISTORICAL NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE DEMONSTRATION.....	3
A.	Introduction.....	3
B.	Summary of the Current WASP Demonstration Program.....	55
C.	Summary of Montana’s New Proposed WASP Demonstration Program Features.....	5
D.	Eligibility..... Error! Bookmark not defined.	
DE.	Medicaid Delivery System and Covered Benefits.....	65
EF.	Summary of Current Demonstration Features to be Continued Under the 1115 Demonstration Amendment	6
FG.	Future Additional Goals of the WASP Demonstration Program	6
SECTION II.	CHANGES REQUESTED TO THE DEMONSTRATION	76
SECTION III.	IMPLEMENTATION OF AMENDMENT	76
SECTION IV.	REQUESTED WAIVERS AND EXPENDITURE AUTHORITIES.....	7
SECTION V.	FINANCIAL DATA	7
A.	Historical Enrollment and Expenditures	7
B.	Projected Enrollment and Expenditures for the Demonstration Amendment.....	9
SECTION VI.	EVALUATION & DEMONSTRATION HYPOTHESES.....	9
A.	Evaluation.....	9
B.	Demonstration Hypotheses	11
SECTION VII.	COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC NOTICE PROCESS	11
SECTION VII.	PUBLIC NOTICE.....	11
APPENDIX		
A.	SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO PUBLIC COMMENTS.....	15
B.	ALL RECEIVED WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS.....	17

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Section I. Historical Narrative Summary of the Demonstration

A. Introduction

The Section 1115 Montana Waiver for Additional Services and Populations was previously titled the Basic Medicaid Waiver.

Basic Medicaid Waiver History:

In 1996, under the authority of an 1115 Welfare Reform Waiver referred to as Families Achieving Independence in Montana (FAIM), Montana implemented a limited Medicaid benefit package of optional services to the same group of adults eligible for Medicaid under Sections 1925 or 1931 of the Social Security Act. The limited Medicaid benefit package was referred to as “Basic Medicaid.” The FAIM Welfare Reform Waiver expired on January 31, 2004, (confirmed by correspondence dated October 7, 2003, from Mr. Mike Fiore, Director, Family and Children’s Health Program Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services).

Basic Medicaid Waiver 2004:

On October 23, 2003, the State of Montana, Department of Public Health and Human Services (Department) submitted a request for an 1115 Basic Medicaid Waiver of amount, duration and scope of services, Section 1902(a)(10)(B) of the Social Security Act, to provide a limited Medicaid benefit package of optional services for those adults age 21 to 64 who are not pregnant or disabled. The Waiver was approved to operate beginning February 1, 2004, and end January 31, 2009 for those Able-Bodied Adults who are eligible for Medicaid under Sections 1925 or 1931 of the Social Security Act.

Previous 1115 Amendments:

A Health Insurance Flexibility and Accountability (HIFA) waiver proposal was submitted on June 27, 2006. The 1115 Basic Medicaid Waiver amendments were submitted on March 23, 2007 and January 28, 2008, requesting seven new optional and expansion populations. Tribal Consultation was completed on December 14, 2007. As a result of discussions with CMS, Montana submitted a revised 1115 Basic Medicaid Waiver amendment on June 6, 2008, requesting four new populations. Further discussion resulted in a July 30, 2009, submittal requesting only one population, Waiver Mental Health Service Plan (WMHSP) individuals (individuals previously covered under a State-funded program who had schizophrenia, severe depression, or bipolar disease), in addition to Able Bodied Adults. Small changes were made to the July 30, 2009, application as a result of continuing conversations with CMS and the Basic Medicaid Waiver was approved December 2010. The Basic Medicaid Waiver Renewal was approved December 24, 2013, effective January 1, 2014. A Waiver amendment to increase coverage for the MWHSP group to cover all individuals with Severe Disabling Mental Illness (SDMI) was submitted on June 30, 2014 and became effective August 1, 2014.

The amendment submitted on November 15, 2015, with an effective date of January 1, 2016, made the following changes:

- Removed able-bodied adults from the Waiver;

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

- Removed individuals under age 65 with SDMI who are not covered by or eligible for Medicare and who are between 0-138% of the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) income level;
- Covered individuals age 18 or older with SDMI who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid benefits and either:
 - Have income 0-138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and are eligible for or enrolled in Medicare; or
 - Have income 139-150% of the FPL regardless of Medicare status (they can be covered or not covered by Medicare and be eligible).
- Aligned the Basic Medicaid benefit package with the Standard Medicaid benefit package. Basic Medicaid previously did not cover or had very limited coverage of audiology, dental and denturist, durable medical equipment (DME), eyeglasses, optometry and ophthalmology for routine eye exams, personal care services, and hearing aids; and
- Adopted a 12-month continuous eligibility period for all non-expansion Medicaid-covered individuals whose eligibility is based on MAGI.

The amendment submitted on March 7, 2016, effective March 1, 2016, changed the name of the Waiver to Section 1115 Montana Waiver for Additional Services and Populations (WASP) and covered individuals determined categorically eligible for Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) for dental treatment services above the Medicaid State Plan cap of \$1,125.

The extension/renewal submitted by DPHHS on July 15, 2016 for the Section 1115 WASP was approved December 15, 2017 and effective January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. This extension/renewal made no changes to the waiver.

Present Context:

Montana's 2021 Legislature passed a budget that explicitly removed funding for 12-month continuous eligibility and directed DPHHS to terminate the policy. The budget was signed by Governor Gianforte on May 20, 2021.

In light of the statutory directive, Montana DPHHS is now seeking a waiver amendment to remove expenditure authority for 12-month continuous eligibility from the Section 1115 Waiver authorities of the WASP by removing the 12-month continuous eligibility for both the individuals age 18 or older with SDMI who are enrolled in WMHSP and for all non-expansion Medicaid-covered individuals whose eligibility is based on MAGI. The removal of the 12-month continuous eligibility for all non-expansion Medicaid covered individuals whose eligibility is based on MAGI removes this population from any coverage under WASP, as this was the only benefit they received under the waiver. The coverage WASP provides for the ABD population, for dental treatment services above the State Plan annual cap of \$1,125, would remain the same.

This amendment also seeks the removal of cost sharing and copayments for demonstration enrollees, to align with the removal of cost sharing from the Montana Medicaid plan effective January 1, 2020. This will apply to WMHSP enrollees as well as the categorically eligible ABD individuals who receive expanded dental treatment services through WASP.

DPHHS is seeking an amendment effective date of July 1, 2021.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

B. Summary of the Current WASP Demonstration Program

The WASP allows Montana to continue benefits for up to 3,000 WMHSP individuals. Secondly, the Waiver continues to cover individuals determined categorically eligible for ABD for dental treatment services above the Medicaid State Plan cap of \$1,125.

Montana’s goal is to continue to provide Standard Medicaid coverage to individuals with SDMI utilizing previously generated Federal Waiver savings from the previously titled Basic Medicaid Waiver. Montanans served under this Waiver greatly reduced their out-of-pocket costs and gained access to significant health care benefits. Continuing to cover ABD Dental Treatment Services above the \$1,125 State Plan dental treatment cap allows this population to receive unlimited dental care.

C. Summary of Montana’s New Proposed WASP Demonstration Program Features

The current 1115 WASP’s Special Terms and Conditions provide expenditure authority to enable 12-month continuous coverage for both the individuals age 18 or older with SDMI enrolled in WMHSP and for all non-expansion Medicaid-covered individuals whose eligibility is based on MAGI.

These populations received continued benefits during any periods within a twelve-month eligibility period regardless of a change of circumstances, with some exceptions.

As directed by statute, DPHHS is seeking the removal of this expenditure authority from its 1115 WASP. DPHHS is not seeking additional changes to the current 1115 Waiver approved on December 15, 2017.

The Demonstration amendment request to remove 12-month continuous eligibility will affect the **non-expansion Medicaid-covered individuals whose eligibility is based on MAGI (the PCR population)**. **This population served by the WASP Program is described in the chart below.**~~current populations served by the WASP Program as described in the chart below.~~

Eligibility Group Name	Social Security Act and CFR Citations	Eligibility Criteria
WMHSP Enrollees	Section 1115 Demonstration	<p>Covered individuals age 18 or older with SDMI who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid benefits and either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have income 0-138% of the FPL and are eligible for or enrolled in Medicare; or • Have income 139-150% of the FPL regardless of Medicare status (they can be covered or not)

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

		covered by Medicare and be eligible).
Parents and Other Caretaker Relatives (PCR)	§1931 and §1925 of the Social Security Act	PCR adults whose eligibility is based on section 1931 or 1925 of the Social Security Act and have income 0-24% FPL.

This amendment also seeks the removal of cost sharing and copayments for demonstration enrollees, to align with the removal of cost sharing from the Montana Medicaid plan effective January 1, 2020. This will apply to WMHSP enrollees as well as the categorically eligible ABD individuals who receive expanded dental treatment services through the WASP waiver.

D. Medicaid Delivery System and Covered Benefits

The State does not propose any changes to the Medicaid health care delivery system; WMHSP demonstration enrollees will continue to receive services through the State’s fee-for-service delivery system as approved through this 1115 WASP Demonstration. Additionally, the coverage WASP provides for the ABD population, for dental treatment services above the State Plan annual cap of \$1,125, would remain the same.

E. Summary of Current Demonstration Features to be Continued Under the 1115 Demonstration Amendment

Under this amendment application, Montana seeks approval to continue the following current Demonstration features:

1. Coverage of the Standard Medicaid benefits package for WMHSP.
 - Covered individuals age 18 or older with SDMI who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid benefits and either:
 - Have income 0-138% of the FPL and are eligible for or enrolled in Medicare; or
 - Have income 139-150% of the FPL regardless of Medicare status (they can be covered or not covered by Medicare and be eligible).
 - **12 Month continuous eligibility for WMHSP.**
2. The ABD population receives additional dental treatment services above the dental treatment services annual cap outlined in the Medicaid State Plan. (Covered dental treatment services, excluding diagnostic, preventive, denture and anesthesia services for adults age 21 and over, are subject to the annual cap of \$1,125 in the State Plan.)

F. Future Additional Goals of the WASP Demonstration Program

This amendment request is seeking to remove expenditure authority for 12-month continuous enrollment **for all non-expansion Medicaid-covered individuals whose eligibility is based on MAGI (the**

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

PCR population) and does not propose any future additional goals of the WASP Demonstration Program beyond what was in the Section 1115 WASP extension/renewal approved on December 15, 2017.

Section II. Changes Requested to the Demonstration

The current 1115 WASP Waiver’s Special Terms and Conditions authorizes expenditure authority to enable 12-month continuous coverage for WMHSP and PCR Populations. ~~As directed by statute,~~ DPHHS is seeking the removal of this expenditure authority from its 1115 WASP Waiver: **for the PCR population only.**

This amendment also seeks the removal of cost sharing and copayments for demonstration enrollees, to align with the removal of cost sharing from the Montana Medicaid plan effective January 1, 2020. This will apply to WMHSP enrollees as well as the categorically eligible ABD individuals who receive expanded dental treatment services through the WASP waiver.

Section III. Implementation of Amendment

Montana is seeking the removal of 12-month continuous enrollment **for the PCR population** to be effective July 1, 2021. DPHHS understands that it is required to maintain continuous Medicaid coverage during the public health emergency as a condition of receiving a temporary 6.2 percent Federal Medical Assistance Program (FMAP) increase under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.¹ ~~In the event that the national public health emergency is extended beyond this amendment effective date, DPHHS will maintain continuous enrollment through the end of the public health emergency.~~

Section IV. Requested Waivers and Expenditure Authorities

This amendment request is seeking to remove § 1115(a)(2) expenditure authority for 12-month continuous enrollment **for the PCR population** and does not propose any additional waiver and expenditure authority changes to the WASP Demonstration Program beyond what is in the extension/renewal for the Section 1115 WASP approved December 15, 2017.

Section V. Financial Data

A. Historical Enrollment and Expenditures

Historical enrollment figures since the launch of the program and corresponding program year expenditures for full coverage years are summarized below.

~~Figure 1a. WASP WMHSP Demonstration Program Historical Enrollment~~

Program Month and Year	Point in Time Enrollment
December 2016	1,123
December 2017	1,182
December 2018	1,173
December 2019	1,125
December 2020	1,071

¹ [P.L. 116-127](#), Families First Coronavirus Response Act, March 18, 2020.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

Figure 1b. WASP PCR Demonstration Program Historical Enrollment

Program Month and Year	Point in Time Enrollment
December 2016	19,830
December 2017	17,033
December 2018	16,155
December 2019	14,745
December 2020	17,912

~~Figure 2a. WASP WMHSP Demonstration Program Historical Total Expenditures~~

Total Expenditures	
Program Year (Calendar Year)	Expenditures (for full year)
2016	7,861,412
2017	7,307,944
2018	6,521,168
2019	7,310,246
2020	7,635,765
Total (2016 – 2020)	36,636,535

Figure 2b. WASP PCR Demonstration Program Historical Total Expenditures

Total Expenditures	
Program Year (Calendar Year)	Expenditures (for full year)
2016	86,172,281
2017	108,710,418
2018	75,937,884
2019	72,771,519
2020	81,359,751
Total (2016 – 2020)	424,951,853

~~Figure 3a. WASP WMHSP Historical Information – PMPM Based by Program Year~~

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

Program Year (Calendar Year)	Count of Enrollees	Member Months	PMPM
2016	1,568	13,550	580.18
2017	1,337	13,885	526.32
2018	1,325	14,295	456.19
2019	1,284	13,786	530.27
2020	1,156	13,168	579.87

Figure 3b. **WASP PCR Historical Information – PMPM Based by Program Year**

Program Year (Calendar Year)	Count of Enrollees	Member Months	PMPM
2016	32,579	230,993	373.05
2017	27,208	214,896	505.87
2018	23,365	196,698	386.06
2019	23,169	182,615	398.50
2020	21,552	186,212	436.92

B. Projected Enrollment and Expenditures for the Demonstration Amendment

Enrollment and expenditure projections under the proposed Demonstration amendment are described below.

Studies estimated that continuous eligibility policies increase coverage continuity by 2.6%.² The projected State and Federal Continuous Eligibility expenditures assuming a 2.6% coverage continuity increase for WMHSP and the PCR groups for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 were \$2,688,944 and for SFY 2023 were \$2,715,834. This amendment removing 12-month continuous eligibility results in an estimated total state general fund savings for SFY 2022 of \$941,130 and a savings of \$953,258 for SFY 2023.

Section VI. Evaluation & Demonstration Hypotheses

A. Evaluation

Montana evaluated the effectiveness of the WASP with a CMS approved evaluation design from December 2010, through December 2017. A baseline survey of the 800 WMHSP individuals was completed in the summer of 2012, and then a follow-up survey was conducted in October 2015. The 2015 return rate was

² See Ku, L. and Steinmetz, E. "Bridging the Gap: Continuity and Quality of Coverage in Medicaid. George Washington University. Sept. 2013. <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/GWContinuity-Report-9-10-13.pdf> [ccf.georgetown.edu]; See also Guyer, J., Schwartz, T, "Manatt on Medicaid: New Strategy for Financing 12 Months of Continuous Coverage for Newly Eligible Adults," available at https://www.manatt.com/uploadedFiles/Content/4_News_and_Events/Newsletters/HealthLaw@Manatt/Manatt_On_Medicaid_Contiuous_Coverage.pdf [manatt.com]

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

25.5% compared to the 2012 return rate of 26.5%. In 2015, approximately 3.5 times the number of surveys were sent out compared to 2012, with about 3.5 times the numbers of surveys returned. In 2015, 704 were returned and in 2012, 209 surveys were returned. The survey helped DPHHS learn about participants’ health status, access to health care, and quality of care. A new survey and analysis were completed in late 2017 and findings were included in the 2017 Annual Report.

A new, less extensive survey of the WASP WMHSP population was completed in September of 2019. The results show a positive increase in member experience in SFY 2019 compared to the prior year. Additionally, the results show an overall higher level of satisfaction with services compared to the non-WASP Montana Medicaid population.

Domain	SFY18	SFY19
General Satisfaction	84%	90%
Access to Services	76%	87%
Quality & Appropriateness of Services	81%	86%
Participation in Treatment	79%	86%
Outcomes	62%	68%
Improved Functioning	60%	66%
Improved Social Connectedness	54%	69%
Average of all 7 Domains	71%	79%

Domain	SFY19 WASP	SFY19 NON-WASP
General Satisfaction	90%	85%
Access to Services	87%	83%
Quality & Appropriateness of Services	86%	87%
Participation in Treatment	86%	86%
Outcomes	68%	64%
Improved Functioning	66%	65%
Improved Social Connectedness	69%	66%
Average of all 7 Domains	79%	77%

In the summer of 2020, over three months into the COVID-19 pandemic, CMS informed Montana that the WASP Medicaid Demonstration evaluation design draft was long overdue. This design draft, due 120 days after approval of the extension, had been due on May 1, 2018. It is believed that change in staffing at both CMS and the State of Montana contributed to this oversight. On August 19, 2020 CMS provided Montana with recommendations for developing an evaluation design draft.

In prior years, the approved WASP evaluation designs have been limited to the WMHSP population only. For this new demonstration period, CMS requested the other two populations: ABD and PCR be included in the evaluation design draft.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 in 2020, CMS and Montana agreed upon a due date for the draft evaluation design. Montana submitted the draft evaluation design on January 13, 2021. The evaluation design was approved April 5, 2021.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

B. Demonstration Hypotheses

This amendment request is seeking to remove § 1115(a)(2) expenditure authority for 12-month continuous enrollment **for the PCR population only** and does not propose any additional hypotheses to the WASP Demonstration Program beyond what is in the extension/renewal submitted by the DPHHS on July 15, 2016 and approved December 15, 2017.

Section VII. Compliance with Public Notice Process

~~To be completed after state notice and public comment period concludes.~~

Public Notice Process

Montana has undertaken a thorough public notice process in compliance with State and federal requirements. The State notified the public of its intent to submit the amendment application on July 2, publishing the amendment application and public notice on the State's website. The State also announced dates and Zoom locations for two public hearings and the tribal consultation meeting. On July 2, 2021, the State published the abbreviated public notice in the State's largest three newspapers: Missoulian, (Missoula, MT); Billings Gazette, (Billings, MT); and the Independent Record, (Helena, MT). The State also emailed an interested parties listserv and the Montana Health Coalition, the State's Medical Care Advisory Committee, to inform them of the application's posting, public comment period, public hearings, and process for public comment submission.

The State certifies that it held two public hearings to present the details of the amendment and to take public comment. The first hearing was held on Wednesday, July 28, 2021 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm MT via Zoom. The second hearing was held on Thursday, July 29, 2021 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm MT via Zoom. Telephone, audio, and video participation was available for both public hearings.

Please refer to the public notice schedule on the State's website for a full calendar of public notice activities related to the amendment and extension application.

Public Comments

The State required 60-day public comment period ran from July 3, 2021 – August 31, 2021.

Commenters were asked to indicate if they were commenting on the proposed WASP amendment, or a similar amendment open for comment relevant to a separate 1115 waiver. Not all commenters clearly indicated this. Montana presents our best effort to report comments received about the 1115 WASP waver amendment.

The State received 262 comments on the amendment, with 242 submitted via email, regular mail, and telephone voicemail, and 20 provided orally at public hearing and tribal consultation.

The majority of comments were not in support of the waiver amendment's request to remove the authority for 12-month continuous eligibility from the underlying 1115 HELP Waiver's Special Terms and Conditions. Specifically, commenters were concerned that eligible individuals would lose coverage due to procedural denials; the churn of eligible individuals would result in higher health care costs and poorer health care outcomes; and Montanans would have less access to primary care and preventative care. Comments received that applied most specifically to WASP concerned the unique

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

difficulties persons with serious mental illness may face if the need arose to requalify for coverage more often.

Tribal Consultation

In accordance with the Montana Medicaid State Plan and federal regulations at 42 CFR §431.408(b), the State conducted tribal consultation for the amendment via written as well as zoom consultation. On July 2, the State sent tribal consultation letters to Indian Health Services, Tribes and Urban Indian Health Centers (ITUs) inviting their input at the public hearings on July 28, 2021 and July 29, 2021. On August 2, 2021 the State sent an invitation and on August 4, 2021 the State sent an agenda for the tribal consultation meeting to ITUs for the Tribal consultation.

On August 24, 2021, Medicaid Director Marie Matthews held the virtual tribal consultation meeting via Zoom to present the request to amend the 1115 Waiver and discuss with the Tribes, Indian Health Services, and Urban Indian Centers the potential impact of the amendment request on HELP Program enrollees. During the tribal consultation, participants raised concerns related to the loss of health coverage and limited access to care as a result of lost coverage; potential churn of eligible individuals due to seasonal work cycles; administrative burden on health care providers to track patient insurance status as well as on DPHHS to process additional application renewals; impact to Purchase and Referred Care (PRC) program; and the negative revenue impacts Tribal, IHS and Urban clinics will face due to patients losing Medicaid coverage.

Response to Public Comments

The DPHHS thanks the commenters' review of the 1115 Waiver amendment request and for their comments. DPHHS was directed by the Montana's Legislature to terminate the policy and will move forward with the amendment application. Montana was only one of two states that had 12-month continuous eligibility for adults through an 1115 Waiver; Montana's revised policy will now be aligned with the vast majority of other states' Medicaid eligibility and enrollment processes. DPHHS is committed to ensuring continuity of coverage to the maximum extent possible and will support processes that ensure smooth renewals and coverage continuity for those who continue to be eligible for the Medicaid program. DPHHS welcomes continued and ongoing feedback on beneficiary impact as this policy is implemented.

The State reviewed and considered all public comments; a more complete summary of the comments and the State's responses are in Appendix A.

Summary of Changes to Demonstration Amendment

In response to the concerns raised about the unique challenges the SDMI population may face with the removal of continuous eligibility, the State has revised this amendment request to exclude the WMHSP population. The request now seeks the removal of 12-month continuous eligibility for only the WASP PCR population, leaving the WMHSP population with continued 12-month continuous eligibility.

Section VIII. Public Notice

**MONTANA SECTION 1115 WAIVER FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND POPULATIONS (WASP)
AMENDMENT APPLICATION
Public Notice – July 2, 2021**

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is providing public notice of its intent to: (1) submit to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), on or before September 3, 2021, a written 1115 Demonstration application to amend the Waiver for Additional Services and Populations (WASP) Demonstration Program to remove 12-month continuous enrollment and (2) hold public hearings to receive comments on the 1115 Demonstration amendment application. DPHHS is seeking the removal of 12-month continuous enrollment to be effective July 1, 2021.

I. Program Description

A. Overview

Montana's Waiver for Additional Services and Populations (WASP), formerly known as the Basic Medicaid Waiver, has remained a positive source of Medicaid coverage since the program's inception in 1996. The Basic Program was comprised of mandatory Medicaid benefits and a collection of optional services available for emergencies and when necessary, for seeking and maintaining employment. These services were available to Able-Bodied Adults (neither pregnant nor disabled) who were parents and/or caretaker relatives of dependent children. This waiver has undergone multiple changes over the years, including extending Medicaid eligibility to a capped number of low-income individuals with Severe Disabling Mental Illness diagnoses through the Waiver Mental Health Service Plan (WMHSP).

Changes that directly impacted this waiver's services in 2016 were precipitated by the implementation of Medicaid expansion, called the Health and Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) Plan. Due to Medicaid expansion, many Basic Medicaid / WASP Program members became eligible for Montana Medicaid. At the same time, significant changes were made to the Basic Program / WASP Program. An amendment effective January 1, 2016, reduced the number of persons covered, changed the nature of the population eligible, changed the plan of benefits for WASP members and implemented 12-month continuous eligibility. Basic Medicaid previously did not cover or had very limited coverage of some services. This amendment aligned the Basic Medicaid benefit package with the Standard Medicaid benefit package and the 12-month continuous eligibility policy for WMHSP enrollees and parent and caretaker relative adults eligible for Medicaid based on Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) standards.

An additional amendment, effective March 1, 2016, changed the name of the Basic Waiver to Waiver for Additional Services and Populations. It also added dental treatment coverage, above the Medicaid State Plan cap of \$1,125, for categorically eligible ABD individuals, as a pass-through cost.

The benefits for this demonstration are offered through a fee for service model to individuals who qualify.

In the spring of 2021, Montana's Legislature passed a budget that explicitly removed funding for 12-month continuous eligibility and directed DPHHS to terminate the policy.³ The Budget was signed by Governor Gianforte on May 20, 2021.

³ HB 2 available at <https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2021/billpdf/HB0002.pdf>. See also budget narrative available at <https://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/Session-2021/HB-2-Narrative/B-Senate-Floor.pdf>.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

In light of the statutory directive, Montana DPHHS is now seeking a waiver amendment to remove expenditure authority for 12-month continuous eligibility from the WASP 1115 waiver. DPHHS is seeking an effective date of July 1, 2021.

B. Summary of Amendment Request

The current 1115 WASP Waiver's Special Terms and Conditions provide expenditure authority to enable 12-month continuous coverage for WMHSP enrollees and Medicaid-eligible parent and caretaker relative adults. Montana's currently approved WASP Waiver authorized expenditures for health care-related costs for WMHSP enrollees and non-expansion Medicaid-covered individuals whose eligibility is based on Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI). These populations received continued benefits during any periods within a twelve-month eligibility period regardless of a change of circumstances, with some exceptions.

As directed by statute, DPHHS is seeking the removal of this expenditure authority from its 1115 WASP Waiver. The removal of this authority for all non-expansion Medicaid-covered individuals whose eligibility is based on MAGI (namely, parent and caretaker relatives) removes this population from any coverage under WASP. This population remains eligible for Medicaid as before; the only change for this population is that they will no longer have 12-month continuous eligibility.

This amendment also seeks the removal of cost sharing and copayments for demonstration enrollees, to align with the removal of cost sharing from the Montana Medicaid plan effective January 1, 2020. This will apply to WMHSP enrollees as well as the categorically eligible Aged, Blind or Disabled individuals who receive expanded dental treatment services through the WASP waiver.

DPHHS understands that it is required to maintain continuous Medicaid coverage during the public health emergency as a condition of receiving a temporary 6.2 percent Federal Medical Assistance Program (FMAP) increase under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.⁴ In the event that the national public health emergency is extended beyond the date of this amendment approval, DPHHS will maintain continuous enrollment through the end of the public health emergency.

C. Eligibility Requirements

The Demonstration amendment request to remove 12-month continuous eligibility will affect the following populations in the WASP Program as described in the chart below.

Eligibility Group Name	Social Security Act and CFR Citations	Income Level
WMHSP	Section IV, Paragraph 2 of WASP Section 1115 Demonstration STCs	139-150% FPL; or 0-138% FLP and eligible for or enrolled in Medicare
Parent and Caretaker Relatives enrolled under sections 1931 or 1925 of the Act	§1931 and §1925 of the Act	0-24% FPL

⁴ P.L. 116-127, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, March 18, 2020.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

D. Health Care Delivery System and Benefits

This amendment request is seeking to remove § 1115(a)(2) expenditure authority for 12-month continuous enrollment and does not propose any changes to the Medicaid health care delivery system; Demonstration enrollees will continue to receive services through the State's fee-for-service delivery system. The State does not propose any changes to benefits for Demonstration enrollees.

E. Cost Sharing

Cost sharing was removed from the Medicaid program as of January 1, 2020. This amendment will remove references to cost sharing and copayments that were in the previously approved waiver.

II. Goals and Objectives

This amendment request is seeking to remove § 1115(a)(2) expenditure authority for 12-month continuous enrollment and does not propose any future additional goals of the WASP Demonstration Program.

III. Enrollment Projections and Annual Expenditures

Studies estimated that continuous eligibility policies increase coverage continuity by 2.6%.⁵ The projected State and Federal Continuous Eligibility expenditures assuming a 2.6% coverage continuity increase for WMHSP and the Parent Caretaker Relative groups for SFY 2022 were \$2,688,944 and SFY 2023 were \$2,715,834. This amendment removing 12-month continuous eligibility results in an estimated total state general fund savings for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 of \$941,130 and a savings of \$953,258 for SFY 2023.

IV. Waiver Expenditure Authorities

This amendment request is seeking to remove § 1115(a)(2) expenditure authority for 12-month continuous enrollment and does not propose any additional waiver and expenditure authority changes to the WASP Demonstration Program.

V. Demonstration Hypotheses and Evaluation Parameters

This amendment request is seeking to remove § 1115(a)(2) expenditure authority for 12-month continuous enrollment and does not propose any additional hypotheses to the WASP Demonstration Program.

VI. Public Review and Comment Process

⁵ See Ku, L. and Steinmetz, E. "Bridging the Gap: Continuity and Quality of Coverage in Medicaid. George Washington University. Sept. 2013. <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/GWContinuity-Report-9-10-13.pdf> [ccf.georgetown.edu]; See also Guyer, J., Schwartz, T, "Manatt on Medicaid: New Strategy for Financing 12 Months of Continuous Coverage for Newly Eligible Adults," available at https://www.manatt.com/uploadedFiles/Content/4_News_and_Events/Newsletters/HealthLaw@Manatt/Manatt_On_Medicaid_Continuous_Coverage.pdf [manatt.com]

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

The complete version of the amendment application is available for public review at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/MontanaHealthcarePrograms/medicaid/2021waspwaiver>. Paper copies are available to be picked up in person at the DPHHS Director's Office located at 111 North Sanders Street, Room 301, Helena, Montana 59601.

Two virtual public meetings will be held regarding the Demonstration application:

(1) Public hearing on July 28 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. MT. The registration link is available at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/MontanaHealthcarePrograms/medicaid/2021waspwaiver>.

(2) Montana Health Coalition meeting on July 29 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. The registration link is available at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/montanahealthcareprograms/medicaid/2021waspwaiver>.

You will receive instructions for joining the meeting upon registration. If special accommodations are needed, contact Mary Eve Kulawik at (406) 444-2584 or mkulawik@mt.gov.

Public comments may be submitted until 11:59 PM (Mountain Time) on August 31, 2021. Questions or public comments may be addressed care of Medicaid WASP Waiver Amendment, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Director's Office, PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210, or by telephone to (406) 444-2584, or by electronic mail to dphhscomments@mt.gov. Please note that comments will continue to be accepted after August 31, 2021, but the state may not be able to consider those comments prior to the initial submission of the Demonstration application to CMS.

After Montana reviews comments submitted during this state public comment period, the state will submit a revised application to CMS. Interested parties will also have an opportunity to officially comment during the additional 30-day federal public comment period; the submitted application will be available for comment on the CMS website at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demo/demonstration-and-waiver-list/index.html>.

Appendix

A. Summary of Responses to Public Comments

Commenters were asked to indicate if they were commenting on the proposed WASP amendment, or a similar amendment open for comment relevant to a separate 1115 waiver. Not all commenters clearly indicated this. Montana presents our best effort to report comments received about the 1115 WASP waver amendment.

The State received 262 comments on the amendment, 242 submitted via email, regular mail, and telephone voicemail and 20 provided orally at public hearings and tribal consultation.

The majority of comments were not in support of the waiver amendment's request to remove the authority for 12-month continuous eligibility from the underlying 1115 WASP Waiver's Special Terms and Conditions. Specifically, commenters were concerned that eligible individuals would lose coverage due to procedural denials; the churn of eligible individuals would result in higher health care costs and poorer health care outcomes; and Montanans would have less access to primary care and preventative care. Comments received that applied most specifically to WASP concerned the unique

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

difficulties persons with serious mental illness may face if the need arose to requalify for coverage more often.

Comment: The majority of commenters expressed concern that this policy would result in loss of coverage.

Response: DPHHS thanks commenters for sharing these important concerns and is committed to mitigating coverage loss to the maximum extent possible. Montana was one of only two states that permitted continuous eligibility for adults through an 1115 Waiver; with the removal of this policy, Montana will now be aligned with the majority of other states' Medicaid eligibility and enrollment processes. Further, many who may lose Medicaid eligibility because of changes in employment or income will have access to other coverage such as through an employer of the subsidized plans on the Federally-facilitated Marketplace (i.e. [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov)).

Comment: Commenters expressed concern that removing continuous eligibility would increase reporting burdens on eligible Montanans. Some of these commenters expressed the specific concern that members with severe and/or disabling mental illness may be especially challenged by increased reporting burdens.

Response: The State thanks commenters for their feedback and for sharing their concerns. Montana DPHHS is committed to implementing this policy change in ways that minimize coverage loss and barriers to access to health care for those who continue to be eligible for Medicaid. DPHHS is committed to leveraging available data to verify eligibility, to the maximum extent possible, in order to reduce the burden of having to provide documentation verification. In most cases, beneficiaries are already required to report such changes in circumstances to the state. The primary difference is that under the current policy, the state does not act on that information until it conducts the individual's renewal at the end of the 12 month period. DPHHS considered the concerns raised specific to the SDMI population and has revised the 1115 WASP amendment request to ensure 12 month continuous eligibility for the WMHSP population remains intact.

Comment: Many commenters expressed concern that the removal of 12 months continuous coverage would lead to churn and result in increased health care costs and poorer health care.

Response: The State thanks the commenters for their feedback. As DPHHS works to implement this program change, DPHHS is committed to mitigating the harm of frequent redeterminations and reducing the amount of churn and disruptions to health care coverage. For any individual who is found ineligible for Medicaid coverage, the State will continue to connect these individuals to the Federally-facilitated Marketplace in order to have their eligibility determined for other Insurance Affordability Programs.

Comment: Some commenters expressed concern that as a result of the removal of 12 months continuous coverage, Montanans will have less access to primary and preventative care.

Response: The State thanks the commenters for sharing their concerns. For any individual who is found ineligible for Medicaid coverage, the State will continue to connect these individuals to the Federally facilitated Marketplace in order to have their eligibility determined for other Insurance Affordability Programs. DPHHS is committed to ensuring Montanans will have access to primary and preventative care and encourages continued and ongoing feedback on beneficiary impact as this policy is implemented.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

Comment: Multiple commenters stated their concern that the 1115 waiver amendment does not advance the objectives of the Medicaid program.

Response: The State thanks the commenters for sharing their concern. Medicaid statute and regulations require state Medicaid agencies to act on any changes of circumstances that may result in a change in eligibility. There is no federal Medicaid State Plan authority for 12 months continuous coverage for adults. Any state that wishes to apply 12 months continuous coverage must waive federal Medicaid requirements to do so. Montana was only one of two states that had 12-month continuous eligibility for adults through an 1115 Waiver; Montana's revised policy will now be aligned with the vast majority of other states' Medicaid programs.

Comment: Some commenters expressed concern that implementing this amendment would cause DPHHS to fall out of compliance with the continuous coverage provision under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

Response: The State appreciates the commenters' concern and is committed to following federal requirements during the federal public health emergency (PHE). DPHHS understands it is federally required to maintain continuous Medicaid coverage during the federal PHE as a condition of receiving the temporary Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP).

Comment: One commenter expressed concern that DPHHS will not have the staff capacity to work with beneficiaries to more regularly renew their Medicaid eligibility as call centers currently have long wait times.

Response: The State appreciates this comment and continues to strive to ensure adequate staff are in place to meet the needs of Montana Medicaid beneficiaries. DPHHS encourages continued and ongoing feedback on beneficiary impact as this policy is implemented.

Comment: One comment expressed support for the waiver amendment as it follows the legislative directive of HB 2 and aligns with the majority of other states' eligibility procedures.

Response: The State appreciates this comment in support of the waiver amendment request.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

B. All Received Written Public Comments

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to oppose to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. No Montanan should be at risk of losing access to health care as they work hard to care for themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. In Montana we take care of one another, and protecting continuous Medicaid eligibility is a big piece of that.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. My work with folks that happen to have disabilities, my experience for 42 years in the medical field, my son on the autism spectrum all have proven that we Montanans *need* continuous eligibility. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid coverage

Continuous medicaid coverage should not be changed from the annual reporting structure that now exists. Harassing recipients during these Covid times is cruel and unnecessary. Medicaid eligible people are stressed enough with employment and health concerns and should not be required to report income more than once a year. It doesn't make sense and requires more red tape and bureaucracy.

Subject Line: Regarding 2021 WASP AMENDMENT

To whom it may concern,

Regarding 2021 Waiver for Additional Services and Populations (WASP) Amendment:

Continuous Medicaid enrollment is best for Montana!

I have helped my elderly family member fill out her Medicaid paperwork. I know it is not an easy task, especially when the enrollee is elderly, struggling with poor health, crisis, etc. Requiring economically stressed people to verify their income more than once a year creates unnecessary confusion and red tape. Eligible people could miss deadlines, which would mean a loss of coverage.

Please note that Medicaid expansion has been a huge success! So many Montanans are healthier because they have access to affordable health coverage. This helps all Montanans! This is a popular program and gives our neighbors more stability and peace of mind.

Think about the elderly. Please don't make their lives any more complicated or difficult.

Continuous Medicaid enrollment is best for Montana!

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank you,

Subject Line: Save Continuous Eligibility for Medicaid
DPHHS Administrators,

I am writing to strongly urge you: **DO NOT END CONTINUOUS COVERAGE** for Medicaid services. This would be very harmful to many low-income Montanans--those who are most in need, including those with mental illness who do not have a supportive family and those with poor access to the Internet, who have difficulty applying. The current system works. Trying to reduce the ranks of those on Medicaid in Montana by ending continuous coverage would actually cost the state more in administrative costs than it would save. Ending continuous coverage is a heartless and un-Christian idea.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT
Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT
Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am a lifelong Montanan now living in Missoula. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. This would harm my family and my community, and it's especially disheartening to see you considering this proposal at a time when so many Montanans are already struggling. Please focus on helping your constituents and reject this shameful proposal now.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT
Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. It is critical to ensure our neighbors stay healthy!

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED], and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program.

This affects me personally. I was laid off from my job due to COVID, and I have been relying on Medicaid for my healthcare. I've been looking for new full time work and working part time in the meantime. It is such a relief to have continuous eligibility and stay on Medicaid, rather than bounce between plans. With my ongoing health issues, staying on Medicaid has been extremely helpful.

Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm for me and many others, and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Subject Line: Protect Continuous medicaid

to: Department of Public Health and Human Services, Director's Office

111 North Sanders Street

PO Box 4210

Helena MT 59604

c/o Mary Eve Kulawik

Phone: (406) 444-2584

Fax: (406) 444-1970

dphhscomments@mt.gov

To whom it may concern,

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' request to weaken the state's Medicaid program by ending "continuous eligibility" for coverage is amoral and costly - financially and people's time and health.

Accept federal grant funding for continuous health coverage for those most in need, including those with mental illnesses. Thousands of Montanans are at risk and the Montana Poor Peoples Campaign urges you to act!

Under continuous eligibility, folks qualify for Medicaid based on their average income over the course of a year, so that fluctuations in their income don't kick them off insurance. Not only is this fair it is less costly to the state to administer.

Under the direction of Governor Gianforte the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is asking federal Medicaid for permission to end 12 month continuous eligibility - not just for working folks, but for people who qualify for Medicaid because they experience severe mental illness. This is a disaster in the making.

We are angry and confused at the way the DPHHS seeks to "save money" at the expense of the marginalized. We must stop this harmful force delivered to the most vulnerable among us. As an elected civil servant our Governor has a moral obligation to make sure that the most vulnerable

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

among us have the resources to care for themselves and their families.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I don't know what you need to hear or how many impacted individuals you need to hear from. This proposed waiver will cause harm to communities across Montana. DPHHS does not need to listen to the Gianforte admin. You need to listen to health experts, doctors, community members. It is never ok to create instability in access to care. But to threaten to do this during hard economic times and during a health pandemic is absurd and cruel.

Do not pass this waiver. Keep continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicare coverage

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Do not eliminate continuous coverage for Medicaid. The change being contemplated is unworkable and cruel.

Subject Line: Please keep continuous eligibility

Dear DPHHS:

Please keep continuous eligibility for our most vulnerable citizens of Montana!

Thanks so much,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Keep continuous eligibility for Montanans

Hello,

I am writing to express my opposition to the possibility of changing continuous eligibility practices for Medicaid. I write as a member of the clergy, and a pastor in Billings, Montana. I believe many people will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility coverage. While we may think that we are saving money in the short run, I do believe we will be hurting people and our society in the long run. Because there will be more emergency room visits from people who will be put off receiving medical care because they cannot afford it. And there will be other societal ramifications from this action that we are not even aware of yet.

Jesus said, to love our neighbors as ourselves. We all have neighbors in our communities that need this coverage to continue to live lives. What kind of society are we creating? One of greater compassion and care for the poor and low-wage Montanan? I certainly hope so. And holding onto the continuous eligibility coverage is one way to live out this commandment!

Subject Line: Comments Against Ending Medicaid's "Continuous Eligibility"

Continuous eligibility coverage for Medicaid is necessary in order to ensure ongoing, basic healthcare for poor and low-wage Montanans -- working Montanans and those with mental illness - - most in need of the program. Ending continuous eligibility would not only harm poor and low-wage Montanans, but would also weaken Montana's healthcare system as a whole.

I am opposed to the proposed waiver to end Medicaid's continuous eligibility because it will harm Montanans and our healthcare system.

Subject Line: Continuous coverage of Medicaid

To whom it may concern,

Once again the state of Montana is choosing to balance its books on the very population of people who can least afford it, the poor and those suffering from mental health issues. Our state and nation is currently in the midst of a terrible pandemic. This is not the time to change horses in the middle of the stream and reconfigure peoples access to health care. I see the change in policy the Gianforte administration is pushing for as dangerous and unhealthy for Montana and Montanans. Covid cases are rising across the state, as are hospitalizations, and covid deaths. Flue season is around the corner. I sincerely doubt the decision to end continuous eligibility will save the state any money and most likely cost our communities money and lives. I am very much against the proposed waiver.

Subject Line: Disregard push for more frequently determine Medicaid eligibility

Dear DPHSS,

What a lot of make-work this is to consider ending continuing eligibility for Medicaid. It's costly to the state and a silly exercise in framing an issue that people are cheating on the system. Of course! people will cheat on the system. They cheat on EVERY. SINGLE. SYSTEM. in business, government and the private sector today. But the number of cheaters is so, so small compared to the 90% or more who legitimately need the coverage that Medicaid provides. Let me tell you my story.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

My roommate of 3 1/2 years was on a very expensive Rx drug, Seroquel, an antipsychotic medication that kept him sane, working, paying taxes and functional. When he didn't have access to it, or went off because it was unaffordable even with every ACA plan that he qualified for, he went to jail. When he went to jail, it cost taxpayers, he went through another mental health crisis and would end up using other public services. It was wasted energy. When he was on Medicaid, he could get Seroquel for a small, affordable co-pay and he stayed a functional citizen contributing to society and the MT tax base. He paid taxes.

He was found floating in the river this week, the end of a sad, difficult life. That's the effect of untreated mental illness.

If you want people to thrive and survive, follow the advice of all the major groups working in MT healthcare today and KEEP CONTINUOUS ELIGIBILITY. It saves lives and being on Medicaid isn't an easy process anyway. Trying to end continuous eligibility is short sighted and not a savings at all.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Public Comment: Cutting Medicaid services
Please do not cut Medicaid by ending continuous eligibility.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: AGAINST continuous eligibility waiver for Medicaid

Poor and low-wage Montanans, like myself, will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

As a life-long Montanan, parent and voter, I am strongly AGAINST this disasterous waiver.

Subject Line: 12 Month Continuous Eligibility for Medicaid

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Continuous Coverage under Medicaid

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

As a cancer survivor, I am especially concerned for patients who may lose coverage in the middle of a regime of chemotherapy or who are now eligible to participate in treatment trials under Medicaid, but may be removed from those trials if their eligibility is interrupted by new Montana rules.

Twelve month continuous eligibility protects the health of Montanans and reduces costs associated with administering the program in our state. I urge you to maintain the existing system.

Subject Line: continuous medicaid eligibilty

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

It is already so stressful being poor. If my son's status up and changes or my status changes, I have no idea what I will do to access my medications, or to keep him seeing his pediatrician regularly. I am a single mom, I work, I go to school. It's hard, and I know that it is not just hard for me. Why add so much stress to the lives of people who are already struggling?

Subject Line: Preserve continuous Medicaid enrollment

Montana DPHHS already has a mechanism for monitoring eligibility for public assistance programs. This system for recouping wrongful benefits is already in place, including recapture through wage garnishment or being banned from other public assistance programs.

Requiring economically stressed people to verify their income more than once a year creates unnecessary confusion and red tape. Eligible people could be unable to meet verification requirements because of lack of access to the internet or because of no local DPHHS office. This would lead to a loss of coverage.

Wrongfully removing people from Medicaid will hurt eligible Montanans. It will also hurt our economy and our healthcare systems. Losses of Medicaid reimbursements to rural hospitals and tribal health providers will reduce healthcare services available to ALL Montanans. When hospitals close, everyone is hurt, and healthcare services are diminished for all.

We do not need a complicated and time-consuming process for people to maintain their enrollment status.

Preserve our continuous enrollment.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank you,

Subject Line: Retain continuous Medicaid coverage
Dear DPHHS,

Many years ago I was a social worker within the DPHHS organization. I was proud to be part of an organization that saw itself as serving the fellow Montanans in need. I hope that sense of mission continues.

Since I retired I have been volunteering as a housing advocate - a job that, over the last six years, has connected me with many individuals who struggle with basic needs for a wide variety of reasons.

One of those struggles is often maintaining eligibility for services and support. Between work and/or just scrambling to survive without housing, medical and other service appointments, lack of access to the internet or limited ability to navigate the technology, and the tremendous fragmentation of some services, it can be very difficult to keep up with eligibility documentation for everything from SNAP benefits to VA or SSI benefits to housing assistance and LIEAP, etc. - let alone Medicaid. This is especially true when you consider how many of them rely on the gig economy or seasonal work that sends their income up for a short while, only to plummet much of the rest of the time.

Continuous Medicaid coverage is absolutely essential for the vulnerable individuals and families who struggle with so many challenges. Without it, even though they have the need and the eligibility for Medicaid, many will lose coverage when they need it most, simply because they do not have the means to keep up with the constant verification and paperwork requirements or because their income jumped up for a few months.

To me this is a moral question. Do we save \$22 Million from the budget by risking the critical medical care and even the lives of thousands of our fellow Montanans? Or do we examine first what would best serve our more vulnerable fellow Montanans and afford their right to access health care?

I hope you will decide based on the needs and rights of our fellow Montanans.

Thank you!

Subject Line: My family supports continuous Medicaid eligibility

My 27 year old son is on Medicaid which provides crucial mental health medications so he can be highly functioning adult. After many months of unemployment, in May he started a seasonal job that ends soon. He worked hard this summer six days a week as a river guide. It is remarkable how much his self esteem has increased. Now he has the energy and drive to look for his next job. But the last thing he needs to worry about is losing Medicaid and his access to his medications. He needs to stay focused on applying for work and continuous eligibility for Medicaid is an essential part of that. If at the end of a year his income has exceeded the Medicaid eligibility amount, not only will our family be very happy for him, but we will help him get insurance through the

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Marketplace.

If the state discontinues 12 month eligibility, it will only cause people like our son to constantly worry about losing access to crucial health care services. For anyone with mental health issues, this kind of worry can be debilitating. My son had a successful 5 months working hard because he did not need to worry about access to the medications that he relies on. In addition, he worked 6 days a week in the wilderness without internet or cell coverage. Obviously, it would not have been practical for him to deal with the paperwork and red tape of Medicaid eligibility during this time.

If the goal of Medicaid is to help people be healthy so they can work and prosper, then 12 month eligibility helps facilitate that. Please continue the current program of 12 month eligibility which makes much more sense than burdening people with more red tape and the worry of losing health care coverage.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Subject Line: Medicaid in Montana

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. When are we going to realize that helping those that are struggling helps us all.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid Enrollment

To whom it may concern,

As a physician in Montana, I am emailing to encourage the DPHHS to continue with the 12 month enrollment for Medicaid.

Requiring Montanans to apply for Medicaid repeatedly through a 12 month period creates extra barriers for people to maintain their Medicaid coverage. This would lead to many people losing access to healthcare that is necessary.

As a pediatrician, I know firsthand how Medicaid coverage helps many of our children remain healthy, continue to go to school, and become thriving adults that contribute to our society. Please do not allow these changes that would lead many children to go without healthcare.

Thank you.

Subject Line: Opposing cuts to Medicaid services

Hi,

I work at [REDACTED] which is a crisis and help line that operates 24/7. I can tell you that we get many many calls from people on Medicaid who absolutely depend on it's services for their well-being.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage you will be hurting so many Montanans.

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Please keep continuous enrollment, because it is more efficient and cost saving for everyone including me, who falls between the cracks quite often, including the time I had my last stroke in 1998, it would have been cheaper for everyone if I didn't have that, and if you keep other folks from experiencing the same thing.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid eligibility

Healthcare is a basic human right. Continuous Medicaid eligibility is essential to treatment of many health conditions and to preventive care. It is effective and efficient for consumers and providers. Please keep this policy in place!

Subject Line: Medicaid continuous eligibility

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: Do NOT end continuous Medicaid eligibility

Many poor and working poor Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage. This is a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced for many Medicaid patients. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility. Please do not end this program

Subject Line: Continuous eligibility - HELP and WASP Medicaid Expansion programs

Discontinuation of Medicaid coverage for several months due to a small seasonal or other temporary increase in income only to be eligible again when that income drops, creates unwarranted stress, uncertainty, and bureaucratic, administrative strain on the system. The cost of repeated in and out of coverage and eligibility checks that could affect 20, 000 people on more has not been estimated or considered. The full human and administrative cost of ending continuous coverage should be considered before further action is taken. The small cash savings will be outweighed by the high administrative costs of repeated eligibility determinations of people entering and leaving coverage. Thus, I oppose

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

amendments to the current Montana Health Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) and WASP programs that would remove the current 12-month continuous eligibility policy.

I also request a copy of the proposed changes.
Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This change is unnecessary and further hinders those most affected by the healthcare system from accessing affordable care. Having to re-apply when life changes occur is one extra issue to worry about while COVID rates increase.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I'm sure you have so much time to read all these postcards. Imagine being asked to reapply to Medicaid every time something changes. Think of Montana, not the politics.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Ending continuous eligibility during any moment, but particularly during the midst of a pandemic could be harmful for so many low-income individuals & families in Montana. People need stable access to healthcare

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Stay on Medicaide

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My friend has been having a hard time with her health issues and she needs her Medicaid. Please don't make life harder on her.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My mom and brother need to take medicine every day. Dont make our family have to worry about how we will afford medicine. We have enough to worry about

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I live in Missoula. Do the right thing & help people out!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

All lives and voices matter.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

As an attorney I represent a significant number of people struggling with addiction who rely on Medicaid expansion to get treatment– much-needed, life saving drug treatment. We will never end the Meth crisis in Montana if we take away healthcare from those who need it most. Do not take away Medicaid the Medicaid expansion, it will do nothing but harm to our state.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I agree with this opposition statement

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

I have developed mental health problems and I have been put in an inpatient place. Its hard on my mom. I don't know what we will do if I don't have Medicaide? Do the right thing

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My sister needs her insurance. She is diabetic and I dont want anything happening to her if she can't get her medicine.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I don't want to lose my Medicaide. I cant get by on work provided insurance. It's not enough on its own and way too expensive by myself

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

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Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Life is full of change, & poor / disadvantaged / "normal" / all (!) people deal with that change; no one should be penalized because life keeps happening. I believe this would disproportionately affect those that already have to jump through too many hoops.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Hello, I live in MT. I believe the proposed changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver will be harmful for man. Other states have studied the effects of gaps in health coverage. It won't be any different in MT. What kind of Americans could or would do that to one another - Not mine -

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Montanans need Medicaid. My child is on Medicaid and changes to the program would be devastating, as I am disabled and live on a fixed income

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I strongly oppose this! This is not fair and this is something people NEED!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

When my partner was laid off we all lost our health insurance. Medicaid was a lifesaver for my family, without it we would have been unable to get insurance. At an incredibly stressful time it was a relief to know we were covered.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please don't make this process harder than it already is!

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

<p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Please keep Medicaid continuous and easier for already insured people to stay on Medicaid! Thanks</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Ending continuous eligibility could put countless Montanans at risk. Healthcare is a human right especially during a pandemic, & it would be devastating for people who rely on Medicaid for their survival and wellbeing. We Are better than this!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Health Care for all!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Medicaid is vital- We must love this resource for those in need. I am a nurse - We must have medical care for all – It is necessary for all to have health care</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>I opposed this! MT needs Health Care (<i>drawing of a heart</i>)</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Medicaid has helped me pay for outpatient treatment and stay sober</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This will cost more than it saves.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My friend would be dead without Medicaid. *(Drawing of 3 hearts)*

Sincerely,

voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Once a person is eligible for Medicaid they should get to stay on it for a year discontinuing Medicaid mid treatment could cost a life.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Continuous eligibility is import for preserving the well-being of Montana's people.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

As housing cost rise and average work wages stay low, it's more important than ever to keep Montanans safe & healthy. As someone with pre-existing conditions such as asthma and severe allergies, I cant afford to buy needed medications on my own after being booted from H.C. for making 9.75

**Sincerely,
a Montanan for Montana**

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please don't mess with Medicaid.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I depend on Medicaid for my life saving medication because Im diabetic. Please don't do this to the people that depend on this. This is my life saving LIFE SAVING medication. I depend on Medicaid

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is a bad idea. People need and depend on Medicaid for life saving medication. This will impact my life negatively. Im diabetic and I cant live without my meds

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I depend on Medicaid for my mental health problems and when I have my medicine I feel normal. Please don't make me sorry about going with out my medicine. Do not end continuous eligibility

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is the wrong and unnecessary timing to remove safety nets of health care coverage for Montanans! What we need to do right now is hold a steady ship to ensure everybody can keep upright through these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Removing eligibility for healthcare options in MT. is a political statement that will cost the lives of those that don't have a voice and should be represented by our elected representatives!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Montana need Healthcare. Dont end continuous eligibility

Sincerely,

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is unfair and cruel to end continuous eligibility. My goddaughter really needs the continuous eligibility. Without it she will find it difficult or impossible to maintain her coverage.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My aunt is on Medicaid. She takes medicine every day that she needs by taking continuous eligibility away you are just telling people don't try to be better your life because your afraid of getting kicked off of your health insurance.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My oldest daughter is having her first child and is waiting for Medicaid approval for herself and soon-to-be-born daughter. We need to put Families first and have access to healthcare to everyone including low-income families. She has a full-time job, her partner has a full-time job but no benefits. This is a must for her family!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Healthcare shouldn't be a privelege it should be how so all Montanans can continue taking life saving medicine people need to stay on the Medicaid that they need to be a productive member of society

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please do not make it more difficult to stay continuously covered by Medicaid. Unfortunately, thinking about health care coverage is factored in to major life changes and pursuing career advancements. Please allow people to continue coverage while pursuing their dreams.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is bad. People need to feel safe with medical just especially the people that take medication daily. Don't take medication and Healthcare away from people that need and depend on it.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Don't mess with Medicaid!! So many of my friends and family depend on it. Do the right thing and don't end continuous eligibility

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: against the the waiver for continuous eligibility

Why are you doing this action? It will hurt already burdened poor and disabled citizens of Montana. How will they be able to submit necessary forms without help from a face to face office? If you persist in doing this waiver, Hospitals, Doctors and clinics will have to close their doors because portions of their patients cannot keep up with forms to medicaid.

Subject Line: HELP Waiver on Medicaid

To the Director, Department of Public Health and Human Services
c/o Mary Eve Kulawik
111 North Sanders Street
PO Box 4210

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Helena MT 59604

The health of poor and low-wage Montanans and our economy will suffer if the state is successful in cutting Medicaid services such as continuous eligibility for coverage. Such a cut would be short-sighted and will weaken both coverage and Montana's whole healthcare system. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility and ask that you put yourself in the shoes of those most in need. The pandemic, which is far from over, has raised physical and mental health needs. We must not add to the burdens of others but instead join with the federal government to assist with health support systems.

Thank you!

--

Subject Line: Against!

Please leave the 12 month continuous eligibility for Medicaid alone. I work in a community health clinic in Livingston, and see no need to increase taxpayer costs to reduce the time period, and do not believe in increasing barriers to healthcare for those among us who are most vulnerable and at need. In my opinion, this is a short sighted, reckless, and potentially costly mistake. Stop it now!

Respectfully,

Subject Line: Medicaid services

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Thank you,

Subject Line: 12 month continuous Medicaid coverage

Dear Montana DPHHS,

I don't understand why the state is trying to end continuous 12 month coverage for Medicaid recipients. It just seems like small minded stinginess to require folks to jump through hoops and fill out paperwork on a shorter than 12 month basis in order to keep their medical coverage. We all know that money spent keeping people healthy by keeping them involved with health care providers is far more efficiently spent than trying to treat them back to health after they've neglected seeing a provider due to lost coverage. This is even more true of people getting assistance with mental health problems who are at risk of a host of debilitating developments if they can't see their therapists or get their prescriptions filled. I ask that the Montana Department of Health and Human Services stop trying to make it harder for our less fortunate citizens to keep their medical coverage. The moves you're pushing aren't compassionate and they're not smart.

Thank you for your consideration,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid best for Montana

I want to encourage you to follow the recommendations of the Montana Human Rights Taskforce.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid & continuous eligibility

Just writing a quick note to let you know that I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous Medicaid eligibility. It creates yet another hurdle for people who have plenty of hurdles already.

Subject Line: Medicaid Continuous Coverage

Please do not discontinue Medicaid continuous coverage. I've helped two elderly people qualify for Medicaid, and neither one of them would likely be able to comply with the paperwork requirements on a continuous basis, although both are clearly and unambiguously eligible. I imagine others are in the same boat. Changing the regulations would do a serious and inhuman disservice to those most in need and least capable of frequent status updates and what you envision requiring.

Subject Line: Support continuous Medicaid enrollment

Medicaid is a program for people who need it and need it continuously. Stopping and starting cancer treatment, thyroxine supplementation, insulin, etc., is not healthy; in fact, it is extremely expensive to society. Health already interferes with their ability to work; multiple reapplications could totally prevent them working, particularly with the associated interruptions to their medical care. Continuous Medicaid enrollment is best for Montana!

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Preserve continuous Medicaid eligibility

To whom it may concern,

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services.

Ending continuous eligibility for coverage will weaken Medicaid coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients -- the Montanans most in need!

In a time of such incredible difficulty why would our state do anything to hurt those struggling to build a life in Montana. We must instead be doing all that we can to support folks. And that includes access to Medicaid services!!!

Do not pass this policy. Keep continuous eligibility in the Montana Medicaid program!

Sincerely

Hello, Mary. My name is [REDACTED], and I live in Missoula. My number is [REDACTED]. I'm calling to voice my opinion during the comment period. I am greatly opposed to the plans for the Republicans to end the 12-month continuous eligibility for people who already qualify for Medicaid Expansion or other programs or specifically mental illness or cancer. They already qualify for that program. They should not have other hoops to go through or risk losing their insurance just for the sake of saving money. Anyway, so if you could add my name to the comment

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

period. If you need to call me back, again [REDACTED]. I just wanted to voice my opposition to that proposed change. Thank you very much. Bye Bye.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Opposition

I oppose the continual attempts by this administration targeting those in the most need in our state due to GG's political agendas. The short sightedness that will not just hurt those low wage and poor Montana's but hurt our whole healthcare system.

Where do people most vulnerable and in need go? By making Medicaid less reliable you lay the burden on an overwhelmed system already. Where is the "Christian" Gov now? Where are his morals to helping those in need?

Really Gov. Gianforte has to stop using his office to cause MORE harm than any supposed good. This is a political agenda using Medicaid targeting marginalized Citizens, threatening the health and well being of Montanan's.

Subject Line: Re: Medicaid Waiver public comment

Dear DPHHS Representative,

Please consider that continuous enrollment on a yearly basis is cost effective and serves an underserved population.

I work with low income individuals, many of whom do not have laptops or PCs, and completion of government forms without these devices can be daunting. I believe that we should not be placing more complexity and barriers to people's access to health care, especially during a pandemic. The more frequently people have to prove eligibility the more likely it is that people will fall through the cracks by missing deadlines, making errors while filling out forms, etc) and be denied health care coverage. This negatively impacts patients and providers. Seasonal workers (landscapers, construction workers, ski and tourism industry workers) could lose health coverage even though their annual earnings would qualify them for Medicaid.

I have reviewed the cost analysis published by the Legislative Fiscal Division, and the cost of increased bureaucratic work to implement this law far outweighs any savings that would be realized.

Please support health care for Montanans by reducing complexity and frequency of proving Medicaid eligibility.

Respectfully,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: On ending continuous eligibility

We must look out for our fellow Montanans, and that means making sure everyone has access to the healthcare they need. As a citizen of Montana, I oppose the waiver to end continuous eligibility, as I believe this would only place more roadblocks in the path of people attempting to be involved and productive members of their communities.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Waiver to end continuous medicaid eligibility

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. In the long run the man hours required to start and stop and start care for our most vulnerable make this proposal more costly to manage and in the long run a greater tax burden to Montanans. We have a responsibility to care for the most vulnerable among us and my expectation is that my representatives meet that responsibility with compassion not political posturing.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This affects me personally because My son and I rely on it to receive continuous care from various professionals in our community. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This affects me personally because due to COVID-19 I have been in and out of work and have been able to access Medicaid. I also work with young mothers who already face so many barriers when accessing health care. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Proposal to complicate the current Medicaid application process to save money is unconscionable, while jeopardizing health coverage

According to an excerpt from an article on this proposal:

"While the state Department of Public Health and Human Services estimates that ending continuous eligibility, or a year of uninterrupted health care coverage, will save the federal and state governments roughly \$22 million a year in the cost of benefits, critics say the change could result in temporary lapses in coverage for more than 20,000 people in a given year.

Inherent to opponents' concerns is the prospect of Montanans losing coverage because of paperwork, communication and bureaucratic errors rather than true income ineligibility, an outcome DPHHS has said it would make every effort to avoid."

The Department of Public Health & Human Services ought to be promoting healthy practices, encouraging coverage and enhancing the ability of those eligible for and in need of Medicaid to access Medicaid.

In my mind it is a dereliction of duty to make folks jump through an increasing number of hoops, the failure of navigating any one of which in a timely fashion could jeopardize their eligibility and it is just plain and simply wrong.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid Services

AGAINST the waiver

I am angry and confused at the way the DPHHS seeks to "save money" at the expense of the marginalized. We must stop this harmful force delivered to the most vulnerable among us. As an elected civil servant our Governor has a moral obligation to make sure that the most vulnerable among us have the resources to care for themselves and their families.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: Medicaid enrollment

Dear DPHHS:

I am writing to urge you to disregard the rules proposed by the legislature to require Medicaid recipients to register every month. This puts undue hardship on people who are already having a hard time financially and medically; it also makes additional unnecessary and costly work for state employees. This seems like more punishment of the victim than it does a solution to a problem.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank you for considering my response.

Subject Line: Comments, Continue 12-month enrollment for Medicaid

Requiring people to repeatedly prove their income during each year in order to avoid losing Medicaid coverage is a bad idea. People on Medicaid, even those who are near the income coverage cut off, have enough problems to deal with. More paperwork and more state staff required for more frequent audits moves the program in the wrong direction. The program is supposed to help these people, not create more headaches for them. Please continue 12-month enrollment for Medicaid.

Subject Line: Montana Medicaid Services

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: Cutting medicaid services.

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility. People are relying on this service.

Subject Line: Medicaid

Most of the people on Medicaid are also hard working Montanans that barely make enough to survive before they are charged outrageous amounts for medical bills. Help them by letting the 12 month application stand. Thank you,

Subject Line: Urgent

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Please do what is right and good to take care of all people-not just the chosen few.

Subject Line: Against the waiver

Hello,

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank you,

Subject Line: No to cutting Medicaid services ...

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. (I, myself, will be directly affected by this inhumane action.)

Subject Line: AGAINST WAIVER TO END MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY

To the DPHHS,

I am working part-time, still looking for full-time work in my field, and currently rely on Medicaid for myself and my son. My wages fluctuate, and the proposed Medicaid eligibility waiver will make it difficult if not impossible for us to have continuous health coverage. This is especially dangerous during the pandemic, and as the Delta variant continues to infect and kill Montanans.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need.

I am AGAINST the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana! Please don't let Governor Gianforte, who knows NOTHING of the struggles of the working class in Montana, take away our health care!

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Vote AGAINST Medicaid Waiver

Please vote AGAINST the Medicaid waiver.

It will hurt the least among us who need consistent medical coverage and IT WILL NOT SAVE MONEY.

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS PROPOSAL.

Subject Line: medicaid continuous enrollemnt

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a Montana and Federal taxpayer I have no problem with continuous medicaid enrollment. Our daughter is mentally ill and would be even worse off and unduly burdened having to re enroll numerous times adding to an already stressful life.

Thank You,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid Enrollment is Best for Montana

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

New rules proposed by the 2021 Montana Legislature would require people to apply for Medicaid repeatedly through a 12-month period. This creates a complicated and time-consuming process for people to maintain their enrollment status, and people could lose access to health care, medication, and more along the way.

Requiring economically stressed people to verify their income more than once a year creates unnecessary confusion and red tape. Eligible people could miss deadlines, which would mean a loss of coverage.

There is no reason to complicate a popular program that has given Montanans more stability and peace of mind.

Subject Line: Medicaid eligibility rules

In a state with so many seasonal jobs: agriculture and recreation being two of the biggest, it seems so counterproductive to require repeated eligibility qualification for Medicaid. Good health is a vital issue for all of us, employer and employee alike. For many with lifelong conditions like asthma and diabetes, it requires consistent and constant attention. Interruptions in care can be catastrophic for a patient and complicate the “business” of health care and health care providers.

Please don't break what's working well.

Subject Line: Do not change continuous eligibility for Medicaid coverage

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need.

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. It is cheaper and simpler for the state to NOT require repeated applications for this help. There is no reason to change the current system. It will only hurt Montanans who need this coverage.

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid Enrollment

I would like to support continuous enrollment for Medicaid.

Asking already stressed and possibly ill people to jump through more bureaucratic hoops to get their medical care covered can create even greater stress and potentially lead to

- People who qualify not getting medical care they deserve/need
- People who qualify having interruptions in their medications or treatments
- Disruption in coverage for seasonal workers
- Added stress/confusion

Making this very important and necessary program more difficult to access would be a shame and harm the peace of mind it has afforded our most needy neighbors.

Please do not end continuous Medicaid enrollment!

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank-you,

"See the light in others and treat them as if that is all you see."

Subject Line: help those in need don't hurt them

Legislation that hurts those most in need should always be voted down. Continuous coverage should be provided for that demographic if eligible. We know what is right and what is wrong and will vote out those who try to pass legislation that is against the Montana way, which is to tell the truth and help those who need and deserve it.

Subject Line: Don't weaken Medicaid by ending continuous eligibility for coverage

I am writing to object to the DPHHS's efforts to end 12 month continuous eligibility for Medicaid coverage which will hurt poor and low-wage Montanans. This policy will weaken coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: WASP Comment

Dear DPHHS Staff,

I strongly support continuing continuous enrollment for Montana's Medicaid program. Medicaid expansion has been enormously successful in providing previously uninsured Montanans with affordable health insurance. These Montanans can live happier, healthier lives due to their access to affordable health care, plus not having to deal with the stress and uncertainty of not having health insurance because it is too expensive.

I strongly oppose ending continuous eligibility for Medicaid for a number of reasons, but especially because adding additional administrative burdens to people who are already living economically precarious lives is unfair and inhumane. Requiring people to verify their incomes more than once a year would create unnecessary confusion and lead to eligible people missing deadlines and losing coverage. Additionally, seasonal workers -- upon whom Montana's agricultural and tourist industries rely -- could lose crucial coverage either by missing deadlines or by being ineligible for part of the year, but still not making enough money to afford private health insurance when they are ineligible.

In summary, there is no reason to add unnecessary and burdensome red tape to a popular and successful program that provides stability, peace of mind, and access to health care to a broad swath of Montanans.

Thank you for taking this into account,

Subject Line: AGAINST the ending of Medicaid continuous eligibility

Ms. Kulawik:

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

I urge the Gianforte administration to really examine the effects of this decision. Thank you for hearing my concern.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Dear Officials at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services,

I am writing to urge you to seriously consider a broader range of consequences that the publicly announced narrow and immediate monetary savings that are expected to result if you halt the current "continuous coverage" policy of Medicaid in Montana.

Please consider the costs of administrative hours spent in removing current enrollees and then re-enrolling those same seasonally or sporadically employed recipients of aid when they again become eligible.

Please consider the added health care costs that would result from people no longer being able to deal with minor medical issues that then become more expensive major issues.

Please look at the long term anguish and mental health issues that will result from not only struggling with short term, changing employment situations, but now having to deal with loosing and re-applying for medical care.

The current regulations provide sufficient oversight to preclude any long term abuse of Medicaid funds in Montana, and should be left with at least a year's worth of continuous coverage to ensure that our populace is healthy and we are neither needlessly straining our health care budgets nor our mental and emotional well being.

Please do not rescind or alter current health care coverage for Montana low income recipients.

Thank you for listening,

Subject Line: HELP Waiver

I'd like to offer my public comment on ending continuous yearly enrollment for some Montanans receiving Medicaid. This a vulnerable population of people that may rely on their health care for survival. Montana benefits from having our residents healthy. I see that it is estimated we will save an estimated \$22 million a year, but at what cost to our state?

DPHHS has not released the calculated cost of the greater administrative load incurred with Montanans having to reenroll in the program. This group of Montanans is already under great stress being at the 138% of the federal poverty level or below. Paperwork and bureaucratic red tape can seem like an overwhelming obstacle for someone without access to networking tools, especially if they are sick. Some in this group are mentally and chronically ill and having consistent health care is critical. Having these folks end up in the emergency room or having dangerous

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

psychotic episodes will produce costs which impact the estimated savings as well. Healthy neighbors improves life for all of us. Please don't end continuous eligibility.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

I'm writing to ask that the eligibility period for Montana Medicaid services not be changed. Please keep them at one year intervals.

While it sounds like an easy program to implement, the variables for error are high. The state is currently understaffed and overloaded with cases for review. Changing the eligibility period would add to the workload and cause an even longer backlog.

Those that qualify for a year and then find a new job that offers more money may use that time to save money to purchase insurance before they are kicked out of the program. The likelihood that they would have insurance after leaving the program is relatively low as the cost of private insurance is unobtainable to most middle class families.

Many rely on Medicaid for counseling services. Give them a year to continue to receive mental health help without the fear or frustration they will have to reapply or abruptly stop attending sessions in groups or one on one.

When my sons were young they qualified for Montana Healthy Kids. There was more than one occasion that the case manager did not send out renewal forms in time for the annual review. We would then have to submit the bills and wait for the caseworker to retroactively provide the coverage due to the lapse from a personnel issue.

Montana has a 6 month probation period when starting a new job. Within that time, a person may be let go at any time. If they had been removed from Medicaid in month two of a higher paying position and then lose the job in month five they have to reapply for the program they were removed from. That requires more paperwork for them and Medicaid employees.

Please keep program eligibility at one year. Many with medicaid coverage don't use the coverage constantly. It's there for emergencies or required medical care.

State taxes are calculated based on a yearly income total once a year and reported once a year with filing taxes. Property taxes are assed for a yearly period not reviewed each month to fluctuate with cycles of tourism where land prices could demand more money. Vehicles are registered and taxed once a year as well. Our county, Flathead, sent out the renewals for vehicles after the expiration of registration last year due to the workload and backlog from the pandemic shutdown. How a monthly review for Medicaid eligibility would be any different and not provide errors or issues is beyond me.

I appreciate your consideration of these comments and hope that the eligibility period does not change.

Thank you,

Subject Line: Fwd Help Act Medicaid continuous eligibility comments

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

My name is [REDACTED]. As a Montanan with a disability, I am concerned about those Montanans with non seen disabilities or chronic disabilities that are relying on Medicaid to maintain health insurance coverage. Not every person with a disability is able to live or work without services. Many times Medicaid is often the primary insurance option for citizens with chronic health conditions , mental health, or chronic disabilities. Continuous access to medical treatment, medications, and other services offered through Montana Medicaid is often essential for many. Please do not end continuous eligibility for Montana Medicaid.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. As a Montanan and someone on Medicaid, this is vital to the life of many low income Montanan's. I would implore you to see reason and support this community in REJECTING this waiver. So many lives have been impacted by COVID-19, and so many have been saved by the continuous eligibility. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. The way it is now gives some stability and predictability to the budgets and lives of the low income people who rely on Medicaid. Having to battle paperwork more than once a year is daunting and will discourage folks who really need the coverage to apply for it. This change seems punitive and these folks have seen enough of that. Please reject the change.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Comment on the HELP waiver-2021 Medicaid Expansion Waiver Amendment
Dear DPHHS:

Please do not end 12 month continuous coverage for Medicaid under the proposed HELP waiver. The financial benefit to the state of Montana is outweighed by the damage to vulnerable populations.

In my work with child welfare cases in Montana courts as well as in our local legal clinic for low income family law cases, I see adults with mental illness frequently who depend on their medication to keep them stable and able to safely parent their children. These single parents want to parent their kids, and Medicaid gives them a steady supply of their medications.

Waiving 12 month coverage will hurt low-income parents and children, some of our most vulnerable Montanans. Please think of them and do not do this.

Thank you.

Subject Line: Medicaid Waiver
Regarding the 2021 WAIVER FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND POPULATIONS (WASP) AMENDMENT

Please do NOT Remove permanent eligibility for Medicaid services. This constant “churning” of reapplication is going to cost state taxpayers by the increased staff time that administrating the program is going to require.

Further, the loss of coverage for low income people that will no doubt results from both confusion and inevitable delays in processing, is going to shift the burden onto healthcare providers who provide services for which they cannot be reimbursed.

But most of all this policy is simply cruel. It is intended to deny low income people critical medical and mental health services that they need. Increased illness and increased severe mental health crises are going to also cost the taxpayers of Montana far more money than I would ever be saved by nickel and dime in people to death.

Subject Line: Continuous Eligibility

As a parent of an adult son with mental retardation, I strongly oppose elimination of continuous eligibility for Medicaid. Our son has heart problems and diabetes. He sees his physicians frequently in order to keep his conditions stable. Since graduating from high school, he has had jobs in restaurants and has lived on his own in an apartment. He can handle his day-to-day responsibilities, but he couldn't understand having to sign up for Medicaid over and over again. We as his parents would have to be alert to his eligibility, and we would have to try to fill out the forms to get him eligible again. All of this would cause anxiety for our son and our family.

It has been are experience in the past, that DPHHS does not alert us to problems, and we have to figure things out again and again. The process of people exiting public programs only to re-apply later would create administrative strain on state public health workers and would end up causing more paperwork and less efficiency in serving people who need Medicaid. Instead of wasting time on repeated eligibility checks, it makes sense to have 12-months of eligibility and a well-defined

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

period to renew eligibility.

In our son's case, his health problems are currently managed very well, but if there was a break in service for any length of time he would likely have serious relapses in his health. The purpose of Medicaid is handle chronic illnesses efficiently so the state does not have to pay enormous sums for acute care.

Let's stop wasting time and money to "find fraud" when fraud is not a significant problem. Let's keep people healthy and productive so that people with disabilities can work and be independent.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

To Whom it may concern,

Does the dignity of the human person matter?

Ah, but it is PRAGMATIC.

The Human Person is but an actuarial number on the chart of PRAGMATISM.

The US has the highest number of incarcerated, violent, cancers, and stress induced illness in the developed world.

This State administration is adding to this with this arbitrary policy.

I submit to you to consider the ripple effect in domestic violence, despair, stress induced healthcare, anxiety, mental health, exacerbation of addiction and so on, and so on, for the sake of removing yet one more rung in the Darwinian "Survival of the Fittest" ideology.

Please Don't Do This.

I am not on Medicaid, but was for a short time after having been forced into poverty with starvation wages, no insurance and an emergency appendectomy. It took me 6 years to pay the \$33,000.00 medical bills on a starvation wage Montana job.

Don't Do This.

Subject Line: continuous coverage

Please do not end continuous eligibility for some Montana Medicaid recipients. Dependable healthcare is the foundation of a successful life. This is a very cost-effective way to support individuals attempting to improve their situations. People with chronic conditions need the certainty that health issues will not affect their ability to work. Administrative costs to make this change would not be inconsiderable, making it even less effective as a money saving strategy.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. So many Montanans, particularly those with chronic health issues and longterm treatments (like cancer) will be relying on their continued care. Ending this eligibility will cause far more harm and for no good reason.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Read that sentence three more times and you'll see how difficult it is to be clear in our present political climate. Let me be more clear.

I have good medical insurance through my husband's former job in Colorado. I'm lucky. A person shouldn't have to be lucky to get adequate medical coverage. I want ALL of my neighbors in Montana to have the coverage I get by being a former Coloradan. Why not? We can afford to be healthy. We can't afford to be sick. If there's federal money for this, that's our money, too. Aren't we a part of this nation? We can strengthen our own communities. We can stand by each other. We can be a stronger Montana when everyone is healthier.

Always work to expand Medicaid and Medicare. Anyone who tries to cut Medicaid or Medicare, set them straight.

I'm counting on the Department of Public Health and Human Services to live up to its name.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I believe it will be harmful to our lower income citizens in Montana, create an expensive bureaucracy, impact the provision of necessary health care and create unnecessary hardships in maintaining good health for Montanans. No Montana should live without health care.

Thank you,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula , Montana. I am writing to voice opposition to the proposed changes to Montana Medicaid expansion program. Specifically, it is my belief that the proposed change in continuous eligibility for the Medicaid program would be very harmful. This change would cause low income working Montanans to lose their healthcare, make it more difficult for people with chronic illness to visit their doctors, Personally, I am very concerned for people who have a disabling mental illness and receive Medicaid benefits through the WASP program. From my 30 years experience with a relative with mental illness, plus past work experience in the field, I know it is often extremely difficult for those who have mental illness to complete paper work on a timely basis, and even to maintain a stable home address. The possibility of losing coverage for medication, and other treatment because of paperwork deadlines would be

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

extremely harmful. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility for people who qualify for Medicaid expansion and for those with a disabling mental illness in Montana.

This will lead to gaps in health coverage. Other states have studied the impact of coverage gaps and have found that nearly half of adults with gaps have skipped or stopped taking prescription medication. I have experienced gaps in coverage while living in Montana and missed weeks of taking my behavioral health prescription medications. Montana does not have enough behavioral health providers so even after someone gets new coverage it can take months to get an appointment with a provider. I was lucky that my gap only lasted a few weeks but it was incredibly destabilizing. Not having access to my regular provider and medication caused me extreme distress, negatively impacted my mental health and my ability to function. For other people it could lead to a serious mental health crisis landing them in the ER or jail. Lives will be at risk.

I am also concerned about what will replace continuous eligibility. All options will create a burden for people on Medicaid, state employees, or both. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Great Falls, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes in Montana's Medicaid Program. My dad raised me on his own, and has been a hard worker for as long as I can remember. He paints houses and does small contracting jobs for a living, and has even done "odd jobs" like plowing/shoveling snow and raking leaves to try to make ends meet. As an Independent Contractor, his income fluctuates depending on a multitude of factors. These can include how many people have work for him to do, if people have money to fix their properties based on the economy, whether there is exterior work alongside interior work because of inclement weather, and if he can outbid many larger construction businesses with more financial flexibility. My dad, as a result of his thirty-plus years of work with construction and painting supplies and extreme exposure to unsafe, industrial-level chemicals, has many ailments. This includes Asthma-COPD Overlap Syndrome and chronic pain, on top of fairly common ailments seen in people in their mid-sixties. As a low-income person, he relies on Medicaid to access the healthcare needed to keep him healthy, able to work and spending time doing the things he loves. I remember a time when my dad didn't have access to healthcare, and although I was young I was able to comprehend how difficult and at times, very scary that was. There are plenty of hardworking Montanans just like my dad who also rely heavily on being able to access Medicaid year-round, regardless of their seasonally-dependent income levels. This would only make life harder on so many Montanans, already struggling to get by. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Public Comment amendments to the current 1115 HELP and WASP Waivers
We wish to submit the following public comment regarding the above mentions amendments:

Poverty is a complex and insidious determinant of health caused by systemic factors that can persist for generations in a family. Life is unstable for many low-income families. This instability is marked by uncertain and irregular employment, erratic work schedules, fluctuating public benefits, shifting household composition, frequent housing moves, and other changes that undermine not only their precarious finances but also, evidence suggests, the health and well-being of themselves and their children.

Those experiencing poverty often have higher rates of chronic disease and difficulty navigating health care systems. This amendment would further add to the instability of these families by adding barriers to health and healthcare for many of our families because of the requirements of reporting by individuals enrolled in this program.

Many of our members will forgo care because of the cost care after the loss of coverage. Lack of access to medical care is a significant public health concern and equates to higher costs in the future. For these reasons and others, these amendments are opposed by the Little Shell Tribe Health Department.

Hopefully, Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please consider my opinion w/o retribution. To end continuous eligibility is just seemingly another way to cripple the already crippled. To victimize the already victimized. All it would do is cost the state more money to implement such - and in the end would only serve to harm the ALREADY HARMED ENOUGH!

Subject Line: Medicaid Eligibility
Dear DPHHS,

Please consider this a public comment about the proposed coverage changes to the DPHHS Medicaid rules.

As a provider and a past/present recipient of Montana Medicaid, I am very familiar with many levels of your services and deeply appreciate the boon this service is for Montana.

Please do not cause extra time/stress burdens for Montanans who are struggling to survive by causing unnecessary paperwork. The time tax on the poor is real. Please maintain 12 month eligibility for Medicaid.

As a rare individual who is currently both a provider and a care recipient, this proposal would be damaging for me on both fronts, and make it more likely that I remain on Medicaid for longer. Why would we add more headache for providers, cause disjointed care for Medicaid recipients, and adversely impact their health due to discontinuations in care and increased stress burden on those already struggling financially?

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

As an example, I had a client who was about to re-commence services, then heard that he was briefly not eligible for Medicaid, cancelled the scheduled services, had another relapse on Meth, and is currently very likely to die in their 40's due to complications. This is the type of problem which is less likely without imposing a time tax on vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your services, please do not make people re-prove eligibility more than once every 6 months.

Kind Regards,

Subject Line: Comment re continuous eligibility for Medicaid

Hello,

I oppose the proposed eligibility change to Medicaid eligibility. The proposal does not specify what eligibility parameters will be used in the future. Without this information, no one can make an educated decision about how this change would impact the Medicaid program, staff, people served, or the cost. Historically, eliminating one process without a new process in place, or even planned, creates dysfunction in our government and increases the cost of providing that service. This proposal, as it stands, will create problems and expense that could be avoided with thoughtful planning.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I have family members who use Medicaid.

This will do more harm than good.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. The pandemic is raging on and families are still struggling. People need to have security around health insurance. No one has the time or energy to devote to endless paperwork to prove ongoing Medicaid eligibility. If continuous eligibility ends, more people will fall ill and die because they will become uninsured. Please reject the waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Montanans depend on it to live.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.
Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Rocky Boy, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana especially during the pandemic of COVID-19 delta variant on the rise. Protect your Montanans!! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Rocky Boy, Montana. I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. I have spent my adult life working with individuals with disabilities and know this will disproportionately affect them. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Montana.
Sincerely,

Subject Line: Please Help Medicaid

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This has affected me personally because my daughter was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and has been either in a state of severe depression or mania for the majority of the past 3 years to the point of either not being able to work or being able to only work part time. She has had to be hospitalized two different times for between 1-3 weeks (once for mania and once for suicidal depression). Her depression continued to be so severe that she was advised to undergo electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) because they couldn't find a medication that was effective for her depression. She ended up having 16 sessions of ECT, which finally began to help with her depression somewhat after the 11th session. Sadly it has negatively affected her memory, making applying for, learning a new job and/or resuming her regular self-employment not possible. She has been able to both do some volunteer work and work as a personal caregiver for an elderly couple in the family, but often is unable to go to work 1-3 days/month due to her health challenges. Ending continuous eligibility will cause devastating results for her and others, leading to severely challenging health outcomes that cannot be good for Montana's population.

I truly believe her Medicaid is the only thing that has allowed her to get the medication, hospitalization to keep her alive and safe when she needs it, and professional help that she needs to begin to manage her condition. Continuous eligibility for Medicaid makes it possible for her to work limited hours in a safe and supportive environment, when her condition allows. There are some days she cannot function due to either the debilitating depression or the mania and psychosis. The proposed requirements will make it more difficult, if not impossible for people with disabilities to get the help they need. Additional eligibility or reporting requirements are unreasonable for the people that need Medicaid to manage a chronic illness and those of us that have to help them with the required paperwork, when they are unable to function or complete it independently.

Health care should not be reserved for wealthy able-bodied people. Living on a low income is hard enough, but to do it without access to healthcare can be impossible. These requirements will not help Montana families succeed. New barriers will deny people access to health care when they need it the most. I am afraid my daughter would not be alive today if she hadn't had access to the medical care she needed, thanks to Medicaid.

Please consider my comments on the proposed waiver. The financial gap in our state between those who can afford health insurance and those who do not have access to health coverage is vast. Montana needs to provide healthcare to all its residents so that low-wage workers with serious health conditions have resources when they need them most. No Montanans should live at risk of becoming jobless and without healthcare.

Subject Line: Medicaid rules change

If the state legislature rejected the changes your department is considering, wouldn't that tell you that Montanans do not support changing from continuous eligibility? Aside from the unnecessary cruelty of uncertainty and constant monitoring/reporting, you are creating a paperwork nightmare

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

on top of what has already been onerous. To what advantage? To WHOSE advantage? Should you really be in the business of punishing and shaming Montanans who need the safety net that Medicaid provides? Or providing a disincentive to improve personal financial stability?

I oppose these changes, as apparently did those who attended a recent hearing on this rule change.

Subject Line: Please don't change continuous eligibility!

To whom it my concern,

I am writing to voice my support or the current support for continuous eligibility. I believe this is a crucial part of our current system to give workers some flexibility in times of transition. Taking away this safety net will only leave more people without insurance. Please do not move forward with this action.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hi, I'm a resident of Missoula, Montana 59808, and I'm calling to urge you not to end continuous eligibility for Medicaid. I don't need a callback. Thank you and have a nice day.

Subject Line: Proposed Medicaid eligibility protocol change

I am writing on my behalf and that of my wife, Linda Svendsen, to register or strong opposition to the DPHHS plan to change the terms of Medicaid eligibility for Montanans. Of all the hair-brained, stupid ideas! This is why people cringe when they hear the word "bureaucrat". If the legislature rejected this idea, why in the name of sanity would DPHHS go forward with this change. DPHHS should instead spend their time supporting local health officials who know what they are talking about when it comes to Covid mitigation methods.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Please, Please do not force a work requirement or eliminate continuous eligibility for Medicaid as conditions of obtaining Medicaid benefits. The people on Medicaid have very rough lives and are doing their best. The vast majority of people want to work and improve their lives. These exceptions to the Medicaid law just adds more stress to their lives.

Thanks,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I am a Montanan who has worked themselves out of extreme poverty. I have spent the last 15 years as a single parent of three. Having come from an impoverished single parent home myself, and having started my own family while I was still in highschool, the deck was stacked against me. However, I took advantage of the various public aid programs and was able to stabilize my situation. I slowly, but surely advanced professionally, yet each step forward was met with at least one giant step back. Everytime I got a raise or a promotion I lost some sort of aid. The raise in income was completely offset by the sudden expense of a previously covered necessity. To make a long story short, after years of struggling in this way I was finally able to get an education that afforded me a career that paid all of the bills. I am in no way beyond the reach of poverty now; like most Americans I am one adversity away from it. That being said, the only reason I find myself emerging from the bog of poverty is due the grace periods of some aid. The continuous eligibility of medicaid allows people to get a foothold, so that when the expense finally falls on their shoulders they are in a place of stability instead of transition.

Ending continuous eligibility will harm Montanans who are transitioning from poverty, especially as we are all trying to recover from the pandemic. Please do your part to keep this critical piece of medicaid intact.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid waiver

Native Americans should be exempt on this waiver because the federal government reimburses the state at 100%FMAP for Native Americans verses 89-90% FMAP for non Natives.

Subject Line: Medicaid

I totally support continuous coverage for Medicaid recipients. Please maintain current rules.

Subject Line: 12 month Medicaid coverage

Dear Gov. Gianforte

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

My best friend needs Medicaid to survive.

I hope you don't kick him off of it just because Medicaid is a government program serving the type of people that our profit driven health system can't make a profit from, proving that the drive for profit (capitalism) is a parasitic racket. Which should be abandoned for it's primitive brutality, as it has been abandoned in every other developed nation in earth.

Subject Line: eligibility for medicaid

as a a constituent, i urge you to maintain current eligibility rules for medicaid.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

Hi my name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, MT and I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. I am a social worker in the community where I work at Mountain Home Montana and the YWCA Missoula, supporting vulnerable families that have experienced domestic violence, homelessness and poverty for most of their lives. They heavily rely on Medicaid to support their health and mental health needs and creating more barriers for them to receive this support will make it more difficult for them to receive the care that they need. Not only do many of my clients rely on Medicaid, I also rely on Medicaid for my personal healthcare needs and hope you will consider the many Montanans this proposed waiver will affect. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Butte. As a social worker in Montana since 2000, I have witnessed firsthand the devastation caused by budget cuts to services for our most vulnerable populations. Without support and assistance, many people with special needs and conditions lose their benefits in the best of circumstances. Now the state of Montana is considering adding the extra burden of continuous eligibility without strengthening the safety nets around the people who need it the most. I predict a rise in issues with people with mental illness and homeless individuals and an increase in services being provided in inappropriate settings such as jails and emergency rooms. This will ultimately cost the state, cities and counties and individual communities much more than providing continuous Medicaid for eligible individuals. Reject this unnecessary and costly waiver. Thank you.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Healthcare is a basic human right and we should not be trying to deny it to the poor and middle income Montanans who need it.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Making it harder for the disabled to continue to receive benefits and Healthcare is wrong. To make a real difference, tax those who make over 400k - THEY are the real welfare queens.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Creating more hassle and headaches for the folks who need this vital access to healthcare, AND creating more hassle and headaches for the state employees tasked with processing additional paperwork seems like a lose-lose situation for Montanans.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. There seems to be some idea this would save Montana money. I can tell you, all this would do is SHIFT the responsibility for low income Montanans health from Medicaid to local hospital emergency rooms. As a healthcare worker I see this DAILY. People without insurance utilize the ER much more, and when they finally seek care they are generally sicker, requiring more resources, staff, hospital beds, to get them back on their feet.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Kicking people off to save pennies would result in exorbitant increases in unpaid bills to local hospitals that are already strained due to Covid. Please choose to keep continuous eligibility, for the benefit of low income Montanans and healthcare workers.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid

I have schizophrenia and a co-occurring disorder and I rely on Medicaid to cover the mental health services that I need and other medical expenses... I am hoping that people who need Medicaid will not lose their coverage but I strongly believe that some changes need to happen. The system defeats its own purpose because of the caps on our wages and savings, that haven't changed in well over 30 years... The cap for what I can have in a bank account has been \$2,000 the whole time but I am not sure about wages. I think that these caps need to be caught up to date, in correlation with the increases of the minimum wage, inflation, etc.. When I am doing what is suggested by my mental health providers, take my meds as prescribed, am not doing any using/drinking and I get help with my vocational goals, I should be able to get some money saved and to be successful.. I believe that this is what my support systems are there for... I see no valid reason why "higher functioning" people who have mental illness cannot work part time, when they are doing what is suggested... The Covid-19 panic screwed me up and has set me back but I am determined to "get on my feet," and to continue with my recovery!!! I have gotten a job with help from Voc-Rehab and Opportunity Resources, I am not working very many ours but when I am ready, I may be able to work more hours!!! Please take these things into consideration... Thank you...

Mary Eve, my name is [REDACTED]. I'm in Bozeman. My cell is [REDACTED]. No need to call me back but I'm calling you because of an article in the paper today on Medicaid and the department taking comments on doing away, on changing the current Medicaid procedure for continuous Medicaid. I am extraordinarily opposed to making that change that the department is now considering where people have to report more frequently what their earnings are and may be bumped off Medicaid for a month if they make more than a certain amount. I think it plays havoc with somebody's medical care and could interrupt a continuous flow of treatment that's necessary for good health. It's silly. It's dangerous and harmful to Montanans. So if you're recording comments, please record mine. [REDACTED]. Thank you. Bye.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Billings, Montana. I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Helena. Ending continuous healthcare will hurt Montanans. This change increases barriers to healthcare hurting low income Montanans and making it harder for people with chronic illnesses to see their doctors. It will lead to negative health outcomes at a time when we can least afford to stress our healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

Keep continuous eligibility for Medicaid! Cut the red tape around health care.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Florence, Montana. I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. This change will waste time and create mounds of unnecessary paperwork. Some people with seasonal employment may lose crucial healthcare that will shorten their lives or lead to suffering.

The current system is not broken. Keeping yearly reviews is the best policy, but if that is not possible, twice-yearly reviews should be the maximum.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I cannot see a reason to make it more difficult to access health care. It's already hard enough.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in whitefish Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This affects me personally because I am a self employed [REDACTED]. Most of my work is in the summer months. If I cannot keep my health care because I earn more for a few months it will be devastating to me. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Comment regarding the MT DPHHS to end 12 month continuous eligibility

To whom this concerns,

My name is [REDACTED], and I'm a resident of [REDACTED]. I am also a member of the Montana chapter of The Poor People's Campaign. It has come to our attention that under the direction of Governor Gianforte, the Montana DPHHS is asking federal Medicaid for permission to end 12 month continuous eligibility—not just for working folks, but for people who qualify for Medicaid because they experience severe mental illness.

I'm not going to mince words: what we have seen coming out of the Gianforte administration and

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

the 2021 legislature is an utter disregard for the poor and low-wage working people of Montana. Not only do I find the threat to thousands of Montanan's health care access morally reprehensible, I also find this policy strategy economically shortsighted. Nearly 100,00 Montanans get coverage through HELP, and nearly 2 in 3 Montana businesses rely on it to provide health insurance to their employees. By DPHHS's own admission, this proposed new bureaucracy would result in thousands of Montanans losing their health insurance and having their care interrupted. The costs to Montanans who lose their coverage, and to the hospitals and clinics that serve them, would be \$24 million, by DPHHS's own estimates. A lack of insurance is a burden on everyone via our public and private institutions.

It makes zero sense to take an effective program and make it less efficient, less fair, and more bureaucratic. Those who get health insurance through the market place (privately or through work) renew their insurance once a year. Why the discrimination against those who, for a host of reasons, get subsidized to have the same access to care?

My family just recently got healthcare through the special open enrollment period, and my 18 month old son was eligible for Healthy Kids Montana/Medicaid. Since he was born, my partner and I have had to bear the financial brunt of having to pay out of pockets the cost his regular wellness care, including early childhood vaccines. We are a low-wage earning family that contributes to the community. But we also are incredibly grateful not to have to chose anymore between paying regular check-up bills and putting food on the table for our kid. If for some reason my partner's wages were to increase just slightly mid year, that peace of mind and financial relief would be stripped away from us. That is not a dignified way to live.

Thank you for taking into consideration mine and the public's comments on this issue. My hope is that the DPHHS will take a course of action that benefits those it serves and keep making Montana a place where people like my family can not only (barely) survive, but thrive.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. If you believe in smaller government, and less intrusion into private lives, a yearly update should be all right.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED]. I live in Montana City, Montana.

I strongly oppose the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program ending continuous eligibility. I have an adult son with a serious mental illness who has received great assistance from Medicaid by providing him access to medications that have helped stabilize his illness so he can have a more functional life. He has faced difficulties keeping full-time employment at times as his illness has required hospitalizations and years of recovery from serious health setbacks. I fear these changes could cause my son great harm and lead to very serious negative health outcomes. This is

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

bad for my son. This is back for so many Montanans. It is shameful that the health department is attempting to take away health benefits from the Montanans who need them the most. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: empty

Health care should be a human right. As someone who is disabled and on limited income, why do you make it so difficult to get affordable coverage? It's cruel and obviously that's the point!

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. All Montanans need reliable access to good medical care regardless of their income. Especially those in low income jobs, or no jobs. We can't have a healthy economy without healthy employees. Please don't make it difficult, or impossible, for Montanans to be healthy and gainfully employed. Protect everyone by protecting this category of Montanans.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid Continuous Enrollment

Please reverse, discontinue, or eliminate all initiatives, efforts to change enrollment in Medicaid to "continuous". Changing enrollment eligibility to "continuous" serves no direct, or demonstrated purpose and is without clear evidence for it's intended goal.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment,

Subject Line: DO NOT end 12-month continuous eligibility for Medicaid

Please do not end 12-month continuous eligibility for Medicaid. Mentally ill need this.

Subject Line: Medicare cuts

To who it may concern

Once again our state government is going after the little guy in the state. Once again, we don't value human life though you all say you support pro life until it actually means you have to put some money on the table to help people. Where is this reflected in this bill? Where is the call for government to have your back if u need help in this state. Somehow giving tax breaks to businesses, bailing out oil and gas companies, giving raises to those that work in state government is all ok. But somehow allowing 100,000 people to have Medicaid for a whole year is unacceptable and has to be addressed. Why is this? The state is so broke and we have to continue to make life harder for those that are already struggling. Lets imagine the paperwork involved in taking

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

someone off of Medicaid for a few months and then maybe having them put back on when maybe they qualify again? So in the state of Montana if a single person makes more than \$12880 they are not eligible for Medicaid, If a family of 4 makes more than \$26000 they are not eligible, but this is who we think in our state we shouldn't support? Are you kidding me? This is who we're going to make life more difficult for? Why? Cause u beleive they're getting something for nothing?

I recently heard that 1/2 of Montana's budget comes from the federal government? It appears to me that as independent as Montana's beleive they are they aren't really? Obviously we aren't paying enough state taxes to support the programs we want. But somehow this doesn't help these people are Medicaid, you're still willing to go after them and leave them with no insurance. What do u think they'll do then? Go to an ER and get free services and the hospitals lose out. Seriously, I am disgusted with this administration and legislature that has done nothing but attack the most vulnerable in our communities, attempt to "fix" problems where there are none. Trans girls playing sports, taking away reproductive rights from women, limiting voting access all in The name of a government that is here to support us with our tax dollars.

Shame on all of you for even thinking after the emotional year, bad financial year for so many that this is also what you need to put out there to the citizens of this state that are already struggling.

Subject Line: Do not end continuous eligibility for Medicaid

Please do not end the current 12-month continuous eligibility policy for Medicaid recipients. It is unfair to the recipients, many of whom may work seasonally, or have fluctuations in income due to fluctuations in the number of hours of work assigned by their employers. It is also unfair to the Montana taxpayer, who will have to pay for the unnecessary extra work caused to the State by eliminating the 12-month continuous eligibility. Such a change purports to "fix" something that has been working quite well, adding inefficiencies to a good program for businesses and for the health of all Montanans. Please do not end the current continuous eligibility policy.

Thank you.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

I am writing in opposition to the elimination of the Continuous Eligibility provision in our present Medicaid program.

The negative impacts on poor, low-income persons by rescinding continuous eligibility far outweigh the benefits of such an action. In fact, given the reduction in health care to Medicaid recipients makes it hard to fathom why Montana legislators would consent to such legislation. Add the need to respond to a pandemic and it is clear that this is not the time to reduce health care to those who are poor. The churn that will be caused will reduce incentives to keep trying to get health care and it will over tax DPHHS with the great increase in administrative effort.

Overall, this move to eliminate continuous eligibility seems mean spirited, given what our State is going through as a result of shutdowns and other threats related to COVID impacts.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Medicaid eligibility review: Not cumbersome or frequent
Hello Linda,

I am writing to you for more information on the new proposals surrounding changes to the state Medicaid plan.

As a private practicing LCPC in Montana, I am financially dependent on having a clear, simple, and easy to navigate system for insurance reimbursement, and recently Montana Medicaid programs have been very helpful, enabling me to achieve financial independence and commit full-time to my new small business. Without Medicaid coverage, this might not be a possibility for me and I might have to close my business. I understand the need to occasionally review Medicaid eligibility, and am hoping to file public comment urging officials to make Medicaid a non-burdensome program in terms of time for proving eligibility, and for eligibility review to occur as infrequently as practicable - a 12 month or 6 month eligibility being much preferable to other frequencies of review.

I realize that I just missed a Zoom meeting on this topic, but would like to be informed as the process goes forward, perhaps you could add me to the mail list for updates to these events? Also, could you please note me as advocating for a simple, infrequent review process?

Kind Regards,

Subject Line: Medicaid Expansion requirements

I am unable to attend the Zoom public meeting tomorrow and would like to provide the following comments in opposition to the Gianforte administration pushing to end 12-month continuous eligibility for Medicaid. Under continuous eligibility, folks qualify for Medicaid based on their average income over the course of a year, so that fluctuations in their income don't kick them off insurance. Not only is this fair it is less costly to administrate.

Under the direction of Governor Gianforte the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is asking federal Medicaid for permission to end 12 month continuous eligibility - not just for working folks, but for people who qualify for Medicaid because they experience severe mental illness.

Do not implement this harmful policy.

There are screenshots of talking points for folks in comments below.

The Montana Budget & Policy Center has determined:

- Ending continuous eligibility threatens thousands of Montanans' health care.
- Republicans and Democrats came together in a bipartisan way to create the HELP program a few years ago, and it has been incredibly successful.
- Nearly 100,00 Montanans get coverage through HELP, and nearly 2 in 3 Montana businesses rely on it to provide health insurance to their employees.
- Ending continuous eligibility just puts red tape between Montanans and their health care.
- Everyone else with insurance renews their coverage once per year, that's just how health insurance works.
- The costs of creating different rules for folks on Medicaid are just too high.
- By DPHHS's own admission, this new bureaucracy will result in thousands of Montanans losing their health insurance and having their care interrupted.
- The costs to Montanans who lose their coverage, and to the hospitals and clinics that serve them,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

will be \$24 million, by DPHHS's own estimates.

- These changes simply cut the legs out from under Montana families and main street businesses, and a time when they are just starting to get back on their feet.
- It makes zero sense to take an effective program and make it less efficient, less fair, and more bureaucratic.

Thank you for consideration and DO THE RIGHT THING FOR ALL MONTANANS!

Subject Line: Public Comment on Montana Medicaid Expansion 1115 Waiver

My name is [REDACTED]. I live in Montana City, Montana.

I strongly oppose the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program ending continuous eligibility. I have an adult son with a serious mental illness who has received great assistance from Medicaid by providing him access to medications that have helped stabilize his illness so he can have a more functional life. He has faced difficulties keeping full-time employment at times as his illness has required hospitalizations and years of recovery from serious health setbacks. I fear these changes could cause my son great harm and lead to very serious negative health outcomes. This is bad for my son. This is bad for so many Montanans. It is shameful that the health department is attempting to take away health benefits from the Montanans who need them the most. Thank you for your consideration.

Subject Line: Opposition to health care red tape

I oppose the cuts to healthcare for Montanans.

Subject Line: Keep continuous eligibility

To the Montana Department of of Public Health and Human Services:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed change to eligibility rules for Medicaid. This change would cost Montana residents, hospitals, and the state, millions of dollars in extra expenses. It benefits no one and will result in added suffering for those in our population who need help paying for health care.

Let's be in the business of providing health care for people in our state, not depriving those in need. Keep eligibility continuous for the year.

Thank you for your consideration,

Subject Line: Medicaid

Dear Governor....I urge you to not change our current Medicaid structure.

To do so would cause needless suffering and for what?

I'm sure you, as a devout caring Jesus loving Christian would not want your constituents to suffer.

Please don't do something so heartless.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without healthcare. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Continuous eligibility is necessary for low-income Montanans who rely on these benefits. We should be making it easier for Montanans to access health care programs & resources, not more difficult.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. So many rural hospitals rely on Medicaid funds. Disrupting continuous eligibility may contribute to the closure of important medical clinics hospitals and services. Our state heavily depends on these funds to keep our medical care going in lower earning communities. Please do not allow for this change to occur. Montana health services depend on us making the right decision on this matter. Do not be afraid to vote in opposition to this proposal.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Mental health and access to insurance coverage

Greetings Governor Gianforte,

As a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in the great state of Montana for the past 15 years I have observed first-hand how access to affordable health care has impacted adults and families in Montana. As a counselor specializing in Trauma and Grief counseling, I see many individuals who are victims of serious trauma and individuals who have experienced the death of love ones due to suicide. As you are likely aware Montana has the highest rates of suicide in the nation especially among our native and veteran populations. If you are interested in changing the fact that our suicide rate is double that of the National average then please know that easier access insurance to help pay for mental health care is imperative!

I am writing to help you understand that when people are victims of trauma, are grieving or struggling with a serious physical or mental diagnosis it is already very difficult for them to do daily tasks, so the new requirement to apply for health insurance many times in a year is counter productive and given our suicide rates, potentially deadly. Lives are at risk as a result of the new policy that requires multiple rather than annual applications for insurance. I have sent copies of this letter to my colleagues so they too can send you a note to remind you of the importance of ease of access to affordable health insurance.

Respectfully submitted,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I oppose the waiver to eliminate 12-month continuous Medicaid eligibility. It makes no sense to me that DPHHS' HEART program and waiver support people with severe mental illness, yet this waiver to change eligibility standards would pull the rug out from under them. While the HEART proposal supports Montanans with severe mental illness, DPHHS proposes to give with one hand and take with the other. The Department's waiver proposal to end 12-month continuous eligibility will

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

jeopardize folks' very access to the supports and services described in the HEART proposal. It would interrupt continuous mental health treatment and could result in a failed treatment program. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards, [REDACTED] Helena/East Helena

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier, I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Stop harming Montana's!

I oppose stopping health care to Montana. Your not on our side Gianforte.

Subject Line: Healthcare

Why do you want to take Healthcare away? Making things like Healthcare available improves the overall health of the people. It is your job!

I am in opposition to the proposal to end continuous eligibility on the Medicaid program.

Subject Line: I oppose Gov Gianforte's rule change on Medicare

Gov. Gianforte: I read with interest about your administration's attacks on Montanans who are served by Medicaid. Why force them to reapply for their health insurance multiple times throughout the year?

I have a beloved family member who, through no fault of his own, has a severe mental illness. He is highly intelligent, takes his meds and works so hard to stay balanced. He is an upstanding citizen who plays by the rules. But his mental illness makes it extremely difficult for him to navigate bureaucratic red tape. By forcing him to reapply for his health insurance multiple times a year, your new rule is bound to cause him severe distress and anxiety. I've had to take him to the hospital more than once when his anxiety and distress cause him to get unbalanced. It always involves a long recovery period. Why do you want to torture people like him with this rule change?

I cannot think of anything more anti-Christian than to hurt low-income people and people with disabilities. Jesus told us repeatedly to help the poor and oppressed, not to make their lives more miserable. Please reconsider your harmful rule change.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to oppose to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. No Montanan should be at risk of losing access to health care as they work hard to care for themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. In Montana we take care of one another, and protecting continuous Medicaid eligibility is a big piece of that.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. My work with folks that happen to have disabilities, my experience for 42 years in the medical field, my son on the autism spectrum all have proven that we Montanans *need* continuous eligibility. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid coverage

Continuous medicaid coverage should not be changed from the annual reporting structure that now exists. Harassing recipients during these Covid times is cruel and unnecessary. Medicaid eligible people are stressed enough with employment and health concerns and should not be required to report income more than once a year. It doesn't make sense and requires more red tape and bureaucracy.

Subject Line: Regarding 2021 WASP AMENDMENT

To whom it may concern,

Regarding 2021 Waiver for Additional Services and Populations (WASP) Amendment:

Continuous Medicaid enrollment is best for Montana!

I have helped my elderly family member fill out her Medicaid paperwork. I know it is not an easy task, especially when the enrollee is elderly, struggling with poor health, crisis, etc. Requiring economically stressed people to verify their income more than once a year creates unnecessary confusion and red tape. Eligible people could miss deadlines, which would mean a loss of coverage.

Please note that Medicaid expansion has been a huge success! So many Montanans are healthier because they have access to affordable health coverage. This helps all Montanans! This is a popular program and gives our neighbors more stability and peace of mind.

Think about the elderly. Please don't make their lives any more complicated or difficult.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Continuous Medicaid enrollment is best for Montana!

Thank you,

**Subject Line: Save Continuous Eligibility for Medicaid
DPHHS Administrators,**

I am writing to strongly urge you: DO NOT END CONTINUOUS COVERAGE for Medicaid services. This would be very harmful to many low-income Montanans--those who are most in need, including those with mental illness who do not have a supportive family and those with poor access to the Internet, who have difficulty applying. The current system works. Trying to reduce the ranks of those on Medicaid in Montana by ending continuous coverage would actually cost the state more in administrative costs than it would save. Ending continuous coverage is a heartless and un-Christian idea.

Sincerely,

**Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT
Dear Director Adam Meier,**

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT
Dear Director Adam Meier,**

I am a lifelong Montanan now living in Missoula. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. This would harm my family and my community, and it's especially disheartening to see you considering this proposal at a time when so many Montanans are already struggling. Please focus on helping your constituents and reject this shameful proposal now.

Sincerely,

**Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT
Dear Director Adam Meier,**

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. It is critical to ensure our neighbors stay healthy!

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED], and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program.

This affects me personally. I was laid off from my job due to COVID, and I have been relying on Medicaid for my healthcare. I've been looking for new full time work and working part time in the meantime. It is such a relief to have continuous eligibility and stay on Medicaid, rather than bounce between plans. With my ongoing health issues, staying on Medicaid has been extremely helpful.

Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm for me and many others, and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Subject Line: Protect Continuous medicaid

to: Department of Public Health and Human Services, Director's Office

111 North Sanders Street

PO Box 4210

Helena MT 59604

c/o Mary Eve Kulawik

Phone: (406) 444-2584

Fax: (406) 444-1970

dphscomments@mt.gov

To whom it may concern,

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' request to weaken the state's Medicaid program by ending "continuous eligibility" for coverage is amoral and costly - financially and people's time and health.

Accept federal grant funding for continuous health coverage for those most in need, including those with mental illnesses. Thousands of Montanans are at risk and the Montana Poor Peoples Campaign urges you to act!

Under continuous eligibility, folks qualify for Medicaid based on their average income over the course of a year, so that fluctuations in their income don't kick them off insurance. Not only is this fair it is less costly to the state to administer.

Under the direction of Governor Gianforte the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is asking federal Medicaid for permission to end 12 month continuous eligibility - not just for working folks, but for people who qualify for Medicaid because they experience severe mental illness. This is a disaster in the making.

We are angry and confused at the way the DPHHS seeks to "save money" at the expense of the marginalized. We must stop this harmful force delivered to the most vulnerable among us. As an

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

elected civil servant our Governor has a moral obligation to make sure that the most vulnerable among us have the resources to care for themselves and their families.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I don't know what you need to hear or how many impacted individuals you need to hear from. This proposed waiver will cause harm to communities across Montana. DPHHS does not need to listen to the Gianforte admin. You need to listen to health experts, doctors, community members. It is never ok to create instability in access to care. But to threaten to do this during hard economic times and during a health pandemic is absurd and cruel.

Do not pass this waiver. Keep continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicare coverage

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Do not eliminate continuous coverage for Medicaid. The change being contemplated is unworkable and cruel.

Subject Line: Please keep continuous eligibility

Dear DPHHS:

Please keep continuous eligibility for our most vulnerable citizens of Montana!

Thanks so much,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Keep continuous eligibility for Montanans

Hello,

I am writing to express my opposition to the possibility of changing continuous eligibility practices for Medicaid. I write as a member of the clergy, and a pastor in Billings, Montana. I believe many people will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility coverage. While we may think that we are saving money in the short run, I do believe we will be hurting people and our society in the long run. Because there will be more emergency room visits from people who will be put off receiving medical care because they cannot afford it. And there will be other societal ramifications from this action that we are not even aware of yet.

Jesus said, to love our neighbors as ourselves. We all have neighbors in our communities that need this coverage to continue to live lives. What kind of society are we creating? One of greater compassion and care for the poor and low-wage Montanan? I certainly hope so. And holding onto the continuous eligibility coverage is one way to live out this commandment!

Subject Line: Comments Against Ending Medicaid's "Continuous Eligibility"

Continuous eligibility coverage for Medicaid is necessary in order to ensure ongoing, basic healthcare for poor and low-wage Montanans -- working Montanans and those with mental illness - - most in need of the program. Ending continuous eligibility would not only harm poor and low-wage Montanans, but would also weaken Montana's healthcare system as a whole.

I am opposed to the proposed waiver to end Medicaid's continuous eligibility because it will harm Montanans and our healthcare system.

Subject Line: Continuous coverage of Medicaid

To whom it may concern,

Once again the state of Montana is choosing to balance its books on the very population of people who can least afford it, the poor and those suffering from mental health issues. Our state and nation is currently in the midst of a terrible pandemic. This is not the time to change horses in the middle of the stream and reconfigure peoples access to health care. I see the change in policy the Gianforte administration is pushing for as dangerous and unhealthy for Montana and Montanans. Covid cases are rising across the state, as are hospitalizations, and covid deaths. Flue season is around the corner. I sincerely doubt the decision to end continuous eligibility will save the state any money and most likely cost our communities money and lives. I am very much against the proposed waiver.

Subject Line: Disregard push for more frequently determine Medicaid eligibilty

Dear DPHSS,

What a lot of make-work this is to consider ending continuing eligibility for Medicaid. It's costly to the state and a silly exercise in framing an issue that people are cheating on the system. Of course! people will cheat on the system. They cheat on EVERY. SINGLE. SYSTEM. in business, government and the private sector today. But the number of cheaters is so, so small compared to the 90% or more who legitimately need the coverage that Medicaid provides. Let me tell you my story.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

My roommate of 3 1/2 years was on a very expensive Rx drug, Seroquel, an antipsychotic medication that kept him sane, working, paying taxes and functional. When he didn't have access to it, or went off because it was unaffordable even with every ACA plan that he qualified for, he went to jail. When he went to jail, it cost taxpayers, he went through another mental health crisis and would end up using other public services. It was wasted energy. When he was on Medicaid, he could get Seroquel for a small, affordable co-pay and he stayed a functional citizen contributing to society and the MT tax base. He paid taxes.

He was found floating in the river this week, the end of a sad, difficult life. That's the effect of untreated mental illness.

If you want people to thrive and survive, follow the advice of all the major groups working in MT healthcare today and KEEP CONTINUOUS ELIGIBILITY. It saves lives and being on Medicaid isn't an easy process anyway. Trying to end continuous eligibility is short sighted and not a savings at all.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Public Comment: Cutting Medicaid services
Please do not cut Medicaid by ending continuous eligibility.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: AGAINST continuous eligibility waiver for Medicaid

Poor and low-wage Montanans, like myself, will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

As a life-long Montanan, parent and voter, I am strongly AGAINST this disasterous waiver.

Subject Line: 12 Month Continuous Eligibility for Medicaid

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Continuous Coverage under Medicaid

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

As a cancer survivor, I am especially concerned for patients who may lose coverage in the middle of a regime of chemotherapy or who are now eligible to participate in treatment trials under Medicaid, but may be removed from those trials if their eligibility is interrupted by new Montana rules.

Twelve month continuous eligibility protects the health of Montanans and reduces costs associated with administering the program in our state. I urge you to maintain the existing system.

Subject Line: continuous medicaid eligibilty

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

It is already so stressful being poor. If my son's status up and changes or my status changes, I have no idea what I will do to access my medications, or to keep him seeing his pediatrician regularly. I am a single mom, I work, I go to school. It's hard, and I know that it is not just hard for me. Why add so much stress to the lives of people who are already struggling?

Subject Line: Preserve continuous Medicaid enrollment

Montana DPHHS already has a mechanism for monitoring eligibility for public assistance programs. This system for recouping wrongful benefits is already in place, including recapture through wage garnishment or being banned from other public assistance programs.

Requiring economically stressed people to verify their income more than once a year creates unnecessary confusion and red tape. Eligible people could be unable to meet verification requirements because of lack of access to the internet or because of no local DPHHS office. This would lead to a loss of coverage.

Wrongfully removing people from Medicaid will hurt eligible Montanans. It will also hurt our economy and our healthcare systems. Losses of Medicaid reimbursements to rural hospitals and tribal health providers will reduce healthcare services available to ALL Montanans. When hospitals close, everyone is hurt, and healthcare services are diminished for all.

We do not need a complicated and time-consuming process for people to maintain their enrollment status.

Preserve our continuous enrollment.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank you,

Subject Line: Retain continuous Medicaid coverage
Dear DPHHS,

Many years ago I was a social worker within the DPHHS organization. I was proud to be part of an organization that saw itself as serving the fellow Montanans in need. I hope that sense of mission continues.

Since I retired I have been volunteering as a housing advocate - a job that, over the last six years, has connected me with many individuals who struggle with basic needs for a wide variety of reasons.

One of those struggles is often maintaining eligibility for services and support. Between work and/or just scrambling to survive without housing, medical and other service appointments, lack of access to the internet or limited ability to navigate the technology, and the tremendous fragmentation of some services, it can be very difficult to keep up with eligibility documentation for everything from SNAP benefits to VA or SSI benefits to housing assistance and LIEAP, etc. - let alone Medicaid. This is especially true when you consider how many of them rely on the gig economy or seasonal work that sends their income up for a short while, only to plummet much of the rest of the time.

Continuous Medicaid coverage is absolutely essential for the vulnerable individuals and families who struggle with so many challenges. Without it, even though they have the need and the eligibility for Medicaid, many will lose coverage when they need it most, simply because they do not have the means to keep up with the constant verification and paperwork requirements or because their income jumped up for a few months.

To me this is a moral question. Do we save \$22 Million from the budget by risking the critical medical care and even the lives of thousands of our fellow Montanans? Or do we examine first what would best serve our more vulnerable fellow Montanans and afford their right to access health care?

I hope you will decide based on the needs and rights of our fellow Montanans.

Thank you!

Subject Line: My family supports continuous Medicaid eligibility

My 27 year old son is on Medicaid which provides crucial mental health medications so he can be highly functioning adult. After many months of unemployment, in May he started a seasonal job that ends soon. He worked hard this summer six days a week as a river guide. It is remarkable how much his self esteem has increased. Now he has the energy and drive to look for his next job. But the last thing he needs to worry about is losing Medicaid and his access to his medications. He needs to stay focused on applying for work and continuous eligibility for Medicaid is an essential part of that. If at the end of a year his income has exceeded the Medicaid eligibility amount, not only will our family be very happy for him, but we will help him get insurance through the

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Marketplace.

If the state discontinues 12 month eligibility, it will only cause people like our son to constantly worry about losing access to crucial health care services. For anyone with mental health issues, this kind of worry can be debilitating. My son had a successful 5 months working hard because he did not need to worry about access to the medications that he relies on. In addition, he worked 6 days a week in the wilderness without internet or cell coverage. Obviously, it would not have been practical for him to deal with the paperwork and red tape of Medicaid eligibility during this time.

If the goal of Medicaid is to help people be healthy so they can work and prosper, then 12 month eligibility helps facilitate that. Please continue the current program of 12 month eligibility which makes much more sense than burdening people with more red tape and the worry of losing health care coverage.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Subject Line: Medicaid in Montana

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. When are we going to realize that helping those that are struggling helps us all.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid Enrollment

To whom it may concern,

As a physician in Montana, I am emailing to encourage the DPHHS to continue with the 12 month enrollment for Medicaid.

Requiring Montanans to apply for Medicaid repeatedly through a 12 month period creates extra barriers for people to maintain their Medicaid coverage. This would lead to many people losing access to healthcare that is necessary.

As a pediatrician, I know firsthand how Medicaid coverage helps many of our children remain healthy, continue to go to school, and become thriving adults that contribute to our society. Please do not allow these changes that would lead many children to go without healthcare.

Thank you.

Subject Line: Opposing cuts to Medicaid services

Hi,

I work at [REDACTED] which is a crisis and help line that operates 24/7. I can tell you that we get many many calls from people on Medicaid who absolutely depend on it's services for their well-being.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage you will be hurting so many Montanans.

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Please keep continuous enrollment, because it is more efficient and cost saving for everyone including me, who falls between the cracks quite often, including the time I had my last stroke in 1998, it would have been cheaper for everyone if I didn't have that, and if you keep other folks from experiencing the same thing.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid eligibility

Healthcare is a basic human right. Continuous Medicaid eligibility is essential to treatment of many health conditions and to preventive care. It is effective and efficient for consumers and providers. Please keep this policy in place!

Subject Line: Medicaid continuous eligibility

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: Do NOT end continuous Medicaid eligibility

Many poor and working poor Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage. This is a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced for many Medicaid patients. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility. Please do not end this program

Subject Line: Continuous eligibility - HELP and WASP Medicaid Expansion programs

Discontinuation of Medicaid coverage for several months due to a small seasonal or other temporary increase in income only to be eligible again when that income drops, creates unwarranted stress, uncertainty, and bureaucratic, administrative strain on the system. The cost of repeated in and out of coverage and eligibility checks that could affect 20, 000 people on more has not been estimated or considered. The full human and administrative cost of ending continuous coverage should be considered before further action is taken. The small cash savings will be outweighed by the high administrative costs of repeated eligibility determinations of people entering and leaving coverage. Thus, I oppose

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

amendments to the current Montana Health Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) and WASP programs that would remove the current 12-month continuous eligibility policy.

I also request a copy of the proposed changes.
Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This change is unnecessary and further hinders those most affected by the healthcare system from accessing affordable care. Having to re-apply when life changes occur is one extra issue to worry about while COVID rates increase.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I'm sure you have so much time to read all these postcards. Imagine being asked to reapply to Medicaid every time something changes. Think of Montana, not the politics.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Ending continuous eligibility during any moment, but particularly during the midst of a pandemic could be harmful for so many low-income individuals & families in Montana. People need stable access to healthcare

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Stay on Medicaide

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My friend has been having a hard time with her health issues and she needs her Medicaid. Please don't make life harder on her.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My mom and brother need to take medicine every day. Dont make our family have to worry about how we will afford medicine. We have enough to worry about

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I live in Missoula. Do the right thing & help people out!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

All lives and voices matter.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

As an attorney I represent a significant number of people struggling with addiction who rely on Medicaid expansion to get treatment– much-needed, life saving drug treatment. We will never end the Meth crisis in Montana if we take away healthcare from those who need it most. Do not take away Medicaid the Medicaid expansion, it will do nothing but harm to our state.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I agree with this opposition statement

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

I have developed mental health problems and I have been put in an inpatient place. Its hard on my mom. I don't know what we will do if I don't have Medicaide? Do the right thing

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My sister needs her insurance. She is diabetic and I dont want anything happening to her if she can't get her medicine.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I don't want to lose my Medicaide. I cant get by on work provided insurance. It's not enough on its own and way too expensive by myself

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

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Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Life is full of change, & poor / disadvantaged / "normal" / all (!) people deal with that change; no one should be penalized because life keeps happening. I believe this would disproportionately affect those that already have to jump through too many hoops.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Hello, I live in MT. I believe the proposed changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver will be harmful for man. Other states have studied the effects of gaps in health coverage. It won't be any different in MT. What kind of Americans could or would do that to one another - Not mine -

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Montanans need Medicaid. My child is on Medicaid and changes to the program would be devastating, as I am disabled and live on a fixed income

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I strongly oppose this! This is not fair and this is something people NEED!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

When my partner was laid off we all lost our health insurance. Medicaid was a lifesaver for my family, without it we would have been unable to get insurance. At an incredibly stressful time it was a relief to know we were covered.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please don't make this process harder than it already is!

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

<p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Please keep Medicaid continuous and easier for already insured people to stay on Medicaid! Thanks</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Ending continuous eligibility could put countless Montanans at risk. Healthcare is a human right especially during a pandemic, & it would be devastating for people who rely on Medicaid for their survival and wellbeing. We Are better than this!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Health Care for all!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Medicaid is vital- We must love this resource for those in need. I am a nurse - We must have medical care for all – It is necessary for all to have health care</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>I opposed this! MT needs Health Care (<i>drawing of a heart</i>)</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.</p> <p>Medicaid has helped me pay for outpatient treatment and stay sober</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This will cost more than it saves.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My friend would be dead without Medicaid. (*Drawing of 3 hearts*)

Sincerely,

voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Once a person is eligible for Medicaid they should get to stay on it for a year discontinuing Medicaid mid treatment could cost a life.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Continuous eligibility is import for preserving the well-being of Montana's people.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

As housing cost rise and average work wages stay low, it's more important than ever to keep Montanans safe & healthy. As someone with pre-existing conditions such as asthma and severe allergies, I cant afford to buy needed medications on my own after being booted from H.C. for making 9.75

**Sincerely,
a Montanan for Montana**

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please don't mess with Medicaid.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I depend on Medicaid for my life saving medication because Im diabetic. Please don't do this to the people that depend on this. This is my life saving LIFE SAVING medication. I depend on Medicaid

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is a bad idea. People need and depend on Medicaid for life saving medication. This will impact my life negatively. Im diabetic and I cant live without my meds

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I depend on Medicaid for my mental health problems and when I have my medicine I feel normal. Please don't make me sorry about going with out my medicine. Do not end continuous eligibility

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is the wrong and unnecessary timing to remove safety nets of health care coverage for Montanans! What we need to do right now is hold a steady ship to ensure everybody can keep upright through these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Removing eligibility for healthcare options in MT. is a political statement that will cost the lives of those that don't have a voice and should be represented by our elected representatives!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Montana need Healthcare. Dont end continuous eligibility

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is unfair and cruel to end continuous eligibility. My goddaughter really needs the continuous eligibility. Without it she will find it difficult or impossible to maintain her coverage.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My aunt is on Medicaid. She takes medicine every day that she needs by taking continuous eligibility away you are just telling people don't try to be better your life because your afraid of getting kicked off of your health insurance.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My oldest daughter is having her first child and is waiting for Medicaid approval for herself and soon-to-be-born daughter. We need to put Families first and have access to healthcare to everyone including low-income families. She has a full-time job, her partner has a full-time job but no benefits. This is a must for her family!

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Healthcare shouldn't be a privelege it should be how so all Montanans can continue taking life saving medicine people need to stay on the Medicaid that they need to be a productive member of society

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please do not make it more difficult to stay continuously covered by Medicaid. Unfortunately, thinking about health care coverage is factored in to major life changes and pursuing career advancements. Please allow people to continue coverage while pursuing their dreams.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

This is bad. People need to feel safe with medical just especially the people that take medication daily. Don't take medication and Healthcare away from people that need and depend on it.

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Don't mess with Medicaid!! So many of my friends and family depend on it. Do the right thing and don't end continuous eligibility

Sincerely,

Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: against the the waiver for continuous eligibility

Why are you doing this action? It will hurt already burdened poor and disabled citizens of Montana. How will they be able to submit necessary forms without help from a face to face office? If you persist in doing this waiver, Hospitals, Doctors and clinics will have to close their doors because portions of their patients cannot keep up with forms to medicaid.

Subject Line: HELP Waiver on Medicaid

To the Director, Department of Public Health and Human Services
c/o Mary Eve Kulawik
111 North Sanders Street
PO Box 4210

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Helena MT 59604

The health of poor and low-wage Montanans and our economy will suffer if the state is successful in cutting Medicaid services such as continuous eligibility for coverage. Such a cut would be short-sighted and will weaken both coverage and Montana's whole healthcare system. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility and ask that you put yourself in the shoes of those most in need. The pandemic, which is far from over, has raised physical and mental health needs. We must not add to the burdens of others but instead join with the federal government to assist with health support systems.

Thank you!

--

Subject Line: Against!

Please leave the 12 month continuous eligibility for Medicaid alone. I work in a community health clinic in Livingston, and see no need to increase taxpayer costs to reduce the time period, and do not believe in increasing barriers to healthcare for those among us who are most vulnerable and at need. In my opinion, this is a short sighted, reckless, and potentially costly mistake. Stop it now!

Respectfully,

Subject Line: Medicaid services

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Thank you,

Subject Line: 12 month continuous Medicaid coverage

Dear Montana DPHHS,

I don't understand why the state is trying to end continuous 12 month coverage for Medicaid recipients. It just seems like small minded stinginess to require folks to jump through hoops and fill out paperwork on a shorter than 12 month basis in order to keep their medical coverage. We all know that money spent keeping people healthy by keeping them involved with health care providers is far more efficiently spent than trying to treat them back to health after they've neglected seeing a provider due to lost coverage. This is even more true of people getting assistance with mental health problems who are at risk of a host of debilitating developments if they can't see their therapists or get their prescriptions filled. I ask that the Montana Department of Health and Human Services stop trying to make it harder for our less fortunate citizens to keep their medical coverage. The moves you're pushing aren't compassionate and they're not smart.

Thank you for your consideration,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid best for Montana

I want to encourage you to follow the recommendations of the Montana Human Rights Taskforce.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid & continuous eligibility

Just writing a quick note to let you know that I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous Medicaid eligibility. It creates yet another hurdle for people who have plenty of hurdles already.

Subject Line: Medicaid Continuous Coverage

Please do not discontinue Medicaid continuous coverage. I've helped two elderly people qualify for Medicaid, and neither one of them would likely be able to comply with the paperwork requirements on a continuous basis, although both are clearly and unambiguously eligible. I imagine others are in the same boat. Changing the regulations would do a serious and inhuman disservice to those most in need and least capable of frequent status updates and what you envision requiring.

Subject Line: Support continuous Medicaid enrollment

Medicaid is a program for people who need it and need it continuously. Stopping and starting cancer treatment, thyroxine supplementation, insulin, etc., is not healthy; in fact, it is extremely expensive to society. Health already interferes with their ability to work; multiple reapplications could totally prevent them working, particularly with the associated interruptions to their medical care. Continuous Medicaid enrollment is best for Montana!

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Preserve continuous Medicaid eligibility

To whom it may concern,

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services.

Ending continuous eligibility for coverage will weaken Medicaid coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients -- the Montanans most in need!

In a time of such incredible difficulty why would our state do anything to hurt those struggling to build a life in Montana. We must instead be doing all that we can to support folks. And that includes access to Medicaid services!!!

Do not pass this policy. Keep continuous eligibility in the Montana Medicaid program!

Sincerely

Hello, Mary. My name is [REDACTED], and I live in Missoula. My number is [REDACTED]. I'm calling to voice my opinion during the comment period. I am greatly opposed to the plans for the Republicans to end the 12-month continuous eligibility for people who already qualify for Medicaid Expansion or other programs or specifically mental illness or cancer. They already qualify for that program. They should not have other hoops to go through or risk losing their insurance just for the sake of saving money. Anyway, so if you could add my name to the comment

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

period. If you need to call me back, again [REDACTED]. I just wanted to voice my opposition to that proposed change. Thank you very much. Bye Bye.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Opposition

I oppose the continual attempts by this administration targeting those in the most need in our state due to GG's political agendas. The short sightedness that will not just hurt those low wage and poor Montana's but hurt our whole healthcare system.

Where do people most vulnerable and in need go? By making Medicaid less reliable you lay the burden on an overwhelmed system already. Where is the "Christian" Gov now? Where are his morals to helping those in need?

Really Gov. Gianforte has to stop using his office to cause MORE harm than any supposed good. This is a political agenda using Medicaid targeting marginalized Citizens, threatening the health and well being of Montanan's.

Subject Line: Re: Medicaid Waiver public comment

Dear DPHHS Representative,

Please consider that continuous enrollment on a yearly basis is cost effective and serves an underserved population.

I work with low income individuals, many of whom do not have laptops or PCs, and completion of government forms without these devices can be daunting. I believe that we should not be placing more complexity and barriers to people's access to health care, especially during a pandemic. The more frequently people have to prove eligibility the more likely it is that people will fall through the cracks by missing deadlines, making errors while filling out forms, etc) and be denied health care coverage. This negatively impacts patients and providers. Seasonal workers (landscapers, construction workers, ski and tourism industry workers) could lose health coverage even though their annual earnings would qualify them for Medicaid.

I have reviewed the cost analysis published by the Legislative Fiscal Division, and the cost of increased bureaucratic work to implement this law far outweighs any savings that would be realized.

Please support health care for Montanans by reducing complexity and frequency of proving Medicaid eligibility.

Respectfully,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: On ending continuous eligibility

We must look out for our fellow Montanans, and that means making sure everyone has access to the healthcare they need. As a citizen of Montana, I oppose the waiver to end continuous eligibility, as I believe this would only place more roadblocks in the path of people attempting to be involved and productive members of their communities.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Waiver to end continuous medicaid eligibility

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. In the long run the man hours required to start and stop and start care for our most vulnerable make this proposal more costly to manage and in the long run a greater tax burden to Montanans. We have a responsibility to care for the most vulnerable among us and my expectation is that my representatives meet that responsibility with compassion not political posturing.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This affects me personally because My son and I rely on it to receive continuous care from various professionals in our community. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This affects me personally because due to COVID-19 I have been in and out of work and have been able to access Medicaid. I also work with young mothers who already face so many barriers when accessing health care. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Proposal to complicate the current Medicaid application process to save money is unconscionable, while jeopardizing health coverage

According to an excerpt from an article on this proposal:

"While the state Department of Public Health and Human Services estimates that ending continuous eligibility, or a year of uninterrupted health care coverage, will save the federal and state governments roughly \$22 million a year in the cost of benefits, critics say the change could result in temporary lapses in coverage for more than 20,000 people in a given year. Inherent to opponents' concerns is the prospect of Montanans losing coverage because of paperwork, communication and bureaucratic errors rather than true income ineligibility, an outcome DPHHS has said it would make every effort to avoid."

The Department of Public Health & Human Services ought to be promoting healthy practices, encouraging coverage and enhancing the ability of those eligible for and in need of Medicaid to access Medicaid.

In my mind it is a dereliction of duty to make folks jump through an increasing number of hoops, the failure of navigating any one of which in a timely fashion could jeopardize their eligibility and it is just plain and simply wrong.

Sincerely,

**Subject Line: Medicaid Services
AGAINST the waiver**

I am angry and confused at the way the DPHHS seeks to "save money" at the expense of the marginalized. We must stop this harmful force delivered to the most vulnerable among us. As an elected civil servant our Governor has a moral obligation to make sure that the most vulnerable among us have the resources to care for themselves and their families.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

**Subject Line: Medicaid enrollment
Dear DPHHS:**

I am writing to urge you to disregard the rules proposed by the legislature to require Medicaid recipients to register every month. This puts undue hardship on people who are already having a hard time financially and medically; it also makes additional unnecessary and costly work for state employees. This seems like more punishment of the victim than it does a solution to a problem.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank you for considering my response.

Subject Line: Comments, Continue 12-month enrollment for Medicaid

Requiring people to repeatedly prove their income during each year in order to avoid losing Medicaid coverage is a bad idea. People on Medicaid, even those who are near the income coverage cut off, have enough problems to deal with. More paperwork and more state staff required for more frequent audits moves the program in the wrong direction. The program is supposed to help these people, not create more headaches for them. Please continue 12-month enrollment for Medicaid.

Subject Line: Montana Medicaid Services

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: Cutting medicaid services.

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility. People are relying on this service.

Subject Line: Medicaid

Most of the people on Medicaid are also hard working Montanans that barely make enough to survive before they are charged outrageous amounts for medical bills. Help them by letting the 12 month application stand. Thank you,

Subject Line: Urgent

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Please do what is right and good to take care of all people-not just the chosen few.

Subject Line: Against the waiver

Hello,

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank you,

Subject Line: No to cutting Medicaid services ...

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. (I, myself, will be directly affected by this inhumane action.)

Subject Line: AGAINST WAIVER TO END MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY

To the DPHHS,

I am working part-time, still looking for full-time work in my field, and currently rely on Medicaid for myself and my son. My wages fluctuate, and the proposed Medicaid eligibility waiver will make it difficult if not impossible for us to have continuous health coverage. This is especially dangerous during the pandemic, and as the Delta variant continues to infect and kill Montanans.

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need.

I am AGAINST the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana! Please don't let Governor Gianforte, who knows NOTHING of the struggles of the working class in Montana, take away our health care!

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Vote AGAINST Medicaid Waiver

Please vote AGAINST the Medicaid waiver.

It will hurt the least among us who need consistent medical coverage and IT WILL NOT SAVE MONEY.

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS PROPOSAL.

Subject Line: medicaid continuous enrollemnt

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a Montana and Federal taxpayer I have no problem with continuous medicaid enrollment. Our daughter is mentally ill and would be even worse off and unduly burdened having to re enroll numerous times adding to an already stressful life.

Thank You,

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid Enrollment is Best for Montana

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

New rules proposed by the 2021 Montana Legislature would require people to apply for Medicaid repeatedly through a 12-month period. This creates a complicated and time-consuming process for people to maintain their enrollment status, and people could lose access to health care, medication, and more along the way.

Requiring economically stressed people to verify their income more than once a year creates unnecessary confusion and red tape. Eligible people could miss deadlines, which would mean a loss of coverage.

There is no reason to complicate a popular program that has given Montanans more stability and peace of mind.

Subject Line: Medicaid eligibility rules

In a state with so many seasonal jobs: agriculture and recreation being two of the biggest, it seems so counterproductive to require repeated eligibility qualification for Medicaid. Good health is a vital issue for all of us, employer and employee alike. For many with lifelong conditions like asthma and diabetes, it requires consistent and constant attention. Interruptions in care can be catastrophic for a patient and complicate the “business” of health care and health care providers.

Please don't break what's working well.

Subject Line: Do not change continuous eligibility for Medicaid coverage

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need.

I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana. It is cheaper and simpler for the state to NOT require repeated applications for this help. There is no reason to change the current system. It will only hurt Montanans who need this coverage.

Subject Line: Continuous Medicaid Enrollment

I would like to support continuous enrollment for Medicaid.

Asking already stressed and possibly ill people to jump through more bureaucratic hoops to get their medical care covered can create even greater stress and potentially lead to

- People who qualify not getting medical care they deserve/need
- People who qualify having interruptions in their medications or treatments
- Disruption in coverage for seasonal workers
- Added stress/confusion

Making this very important and necessary program more difficult to access would be a shame and harm the peace of mind it has afforded our most needy neighbors.

Please do not end continuous Medicaid enrollment!

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Thank-you,

"See the light in others and treat them as if that is all you see."

Subject Line: help those in need don't hurt them

Legislation that hurts those most in need should always be voted down. Continuous coverage should be provided for that demographic if eligible. We know what is right and what is wrong and will vote out those who try to pass legislation that is against the Montana way, which is to tell the truth and help those who need and deserve it.

Subject Line: Don't weaken Medicaid by ending continuous eligibility for coverage

I am writing to object to the DPHHS's efforts to end 12 month continuous eligibility for Medicaid coverage which will hurt poor and low-wage Montanans. This policy will weaken coverage and hurt Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

Subject Line: WASP Comment

Dear DPHHS Staff,

I strongly support continuing continuous enrollment for Montana's Medicaid program. Medicaid expansion has been enormously successful in providing previously uninsured Montanans with affordable health insurance. These Montanans can live happier, healthier lives due to their access to affordable health care, plus not having to deal with the stress and uncertainty of not having health insurance because it is too expensive.

I strongly oppose ending continuous eligibility for Medicaid for a number of reasons, but especially because adding additional administrative burdens to people who are already living economically precarious lives is unfair and inhumane. Requiring people to verify their incomes more than once a year would create unnecessary confusion and lead to eligible people missing deadlines and losing coverage. Additionally, seasonal workers -- upon whom Montana's agricultural and tourist industries rely -- could lose crucial coverage either by missing deadlines or by being ineligible for part of the year, but still not making enough money to afford private health insurance when they are ineligible.

In summary, there is no reason to add unnecessary and burdensome red tape to a popular and successful program that provides stability, peace of mind, and access to health care to a broad swath of Montanans.

Thank you for taking this into account,

Subject Line: AGAINST the ending of Medicaid continuous eligibility

Ms. Kulawik:

Poor and low-wage Montanans will be hurt by the state's attempt to cut Medicaid services by ending continuous eligibility for coverage, a policy that will weaken the coverage and hurt

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Montana's whole healthcare system. By making Medicaid a less reliable coverage, healthcare may be reduced to many Medicaid patients, reducing coverage for those most in need. I am against the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility, a move that harms those struggling to build a life in Montana.

I urge the Gianforte administration to really examine the effects of this decision. Thank you for hearing my concern.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Dear Officials at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services,

I am writing to urge you to seriously consider a broader range of consequences that the publicly announced narrow and immediate monetary savings that are expected to result if you halt the current "continuous coverage" policy of Medicaid in Montana.

Please consider the costs of administrative hours spent in removing current enrollees and then re-enrolling those same seasonally or sporadically employed recipients of aid when they again become eligible.

Please consider the added health care costs that would result from people no longer being able to deal with minor medical issues that then become more expensive major issues.

Please look at the long term anguish and mental health issues that will result from not only struggling with short term, changing employment situations, but now having to deal with loosing and re-applying for medical care.

The current regulations provide sufficient oversight to preclude any long term abuse of Medicaid funds in Montana, and should be left with at least a year's worth of continuous coverage to ensure that our populace is healthy and we are neither needlessly straining our health care budgets nor our mental and emotional well being.

Please do not rescind or alter current health care coverage for Montana low income recipients.

Thank you for listening,

Subject Line: HELP Waiver

I'd like to offer my public comment on ending continuous yearly enrollment for some Montanans receiving Medicaid. This a vulnerable population of people that may rely on their health care for survival. Montana benefits from having our residents healthy. I see that it is estimated we will save an estimated \$22 million a year, but at what cost to our state?

DPHHS has not released the calculated cost of the greater administrative load incurred with Montanans having to reenroll in the program. This group of Montanans is already under great stress being at the 138% of the federal poverty level or below. Paperwork and bureaucratic red tape can seem like an overwhelming obstacle for someone without access to networking tools, especially if they are sick. Some in this group are mentally and chronically ill and having consistent health care is critical. Having these folks end up in the emergency room or having dangerous

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

psychotic episodes will produce costs which impact the estimated savings as well. Healthy neighbors improves life for all of us. Please don't end continuous eligibility.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

I'm writing to ask that the eligibility period for Montana Medicaid services not be changed. Please keep them at one year intervals.

While it sounds like an easy program to implement, the variables for error are high. The state is currently understaffed and overloaded with cases for review. Changing the eligibility period would add to the workload and cause an even longer backlog.

Those that qualify for a year and then find a new job that offers more money may use that time to save money to purchase insurance before they are kicked out of the program. The likelihood that they would have insurance after leaving the program is relatively low as the cost of private insurance is unobtainable to most middle class families.

Many rely on Medicaid for counseling services. Give them a year to continue to receive mental health help without the fear or frustration they will have to reapply or abruptly stop attending sessions in groups or one on one.

When my sons were young they qualified for Montana Healthy Kids. There was more than one occasion that the case manager did not send out renewal forms in time for the annual review. We would then have to submit the bills and wait for the caseworker to retroactively provide the coverage due to the lapse from a personnel issue.

Montana has a 6 month probation period when starting a new job. Within that time, a person may be let go at any time. If they had been removed from Medicaid in month two of a higher paying position and then lose the job in month five they have to reapply for the program they were removed from. That requires more paperwork for them and Medicaid employees.

Please keep program eligibility at one year. Many with medicaid coverage don't use the coverage constantly. It's there for emergencies or required medical care.

State taxes are calculated based on a yearly income total once a year and reported once a year with filing taxes. Property taxes are assed for a yearly period not reviewed each month to fluctuate with cycles of tourism where land prices could demand more money. Vehicles are registered and taxed once a year as well. Our county, Flathead, sent out the renewals for vehicles after the expiration of registration last year due to the workload and backlog from the pandemic shutdown. How a monthly review for Medicaid eligibility would be any different and not provide errors or issues is beyond me.

I appreciate your consideration of these comments and hope that the eligibility period does not change.

Thank you,

Subject Line: Fwd Help Act Medicaid continuous eligibility comments

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

My name is [REDACTED]. As a Montanan with a disability, I am concerned about those Montanans with non seen disabilities or chronic disabilities that are relying on Medicaid to maintain health insurance coverage. Not every person with a disability is able to live or work without services. Many times Medicaid is often the primary insurance option for citizens with chronic health conditions , mental health, or chronic disabilities. Continuous access to medical treatment, medications, and other services offered through Montana Medicaid is often essential for many. Please do not end continuous eligibility for Montana Medicaid.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. As a Montanan and someone on Medicaid, this is vital to the life of many low income Montanan's. I would implore you to see reason and support this community in REJECTING this waiver. So many lives have been impacted by COVID-19, and so many have been saved by the continuous eligibility. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. The way it is now gives some stability and predictability to the budgets and lives of the low income people who rely on Medicaid. Having to battle paperwork more than once a year is daunting and will discourage folks who really need the coverage to apply for it. This change seems punitive and these folks have seen enough of that. Please reject the change.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Comment on the HELP waiver-2021 Medicaid Expansion Waiver Amendment
Dear DPHHS:

Please do not end 12 month continuous coverage for Medicaid under the proposed HELP waiver. The financial benefit to the state of Montana is outweighed by the damage to vulnerable populations.

In my work with child welfare cases in Montana courts as well as in our local legal clinic for low income family law cases, I see adults with mental illness frequently who depend on their medication to keep them stable and able to safely parent their children. These single parents want to parent their kids, and Medicaid gives them a steady supply of their medications.

Waiving 12 month coverage will hurt low-income parents and children, some of our most vulnerable Montanans. Please think of them and do not do this.

Thank you.

Subject Line: Medicaid Waiver
Regarding the 2021 WAIVER FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND POPULATIONS (WASP) AMENDMENT

Please do NOT Remove permanent eligibility for Medicaid services. This constant “churning” of reapplication is going to cost state taxpayers by the increased staff time that administrating the program is going to require.

Further, the loss of coverage for low income people that will no doubt results from both confusion and inevitable delays in processing, is going to shift the burden onto healthcare providers who provide services for which they cannot be reimbursed.

But most of all this policy is simply cruel. It is intended to deny low income people critical medical and mental health services that they need. Increased illness and increased severe mental health crises are going to also cost the taxpayers of Montana far more money than I would ever be saved by nickel and dime in people to death.

Subject Line: Continuous Eligibility

As a parent of an adult son with mental retardation, I strongly oppose elimination of continuous eligibility for Medicaid. Our son has heart problems and diabetes. He sees his physicians frequently in order to keep his conditions stable. Since graduating from high school, he has had jobs in restaurants and has lived on his own in an apartment. He can handle his day-to-day responsibilities, but he couldn't understand having to sign up for Medicaid over and over again. We as his parents would have to be alert to his eligibility, and we would have to try to fill out the forms to get him eligible again. All of this would cause anxiety for our son and our family.

It has been are experience in the past, that DPHHS does not alert us to problems, and we have to figure things out again and again. The process of people exiting public programs only to re-apply later would create administrative strain on state public health workers and would end up causing more paperwork and less efficiency in serving people who need Medicaid. Instead of wasting time on repeated eligibility checks, it makes sense to have 12-months of eligibility and a well-defined

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

period to renew eligibility.

In our son's case, his health problems are currently managed very well, but if there was a break in service for any length of time he would likely have serious relapses in his health. The purpose of Medicaid is handle chronic illnesses efficiently so the state does not have to pay enormous sums for acute care.

Let's stop wasting time and money to "find fraud" when fraud is not a significant problem. Let's keep people healthy and productive so that people with disabilities can work and be independent.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

To Whom it may concern,

Does the dignity of the human person matter?

Ah, but it is PRAGMATIC.

The Human Person is but an actuarial number on the chart of PRAGMATISM.

The US has the highest number of incarcerated, violent, cancers, and stress induced illness in the developed world.

This State administration is adding to this with this arbitrary policy.

I submit to you to consider the ripple effect in domestic violence, despair, stress induced healthcare, anxiety, mental health, exacerbation of addiction and so on, and so on, for the sake of removing yet one more rung in the Darwinian "Survival of the Fittest" ideology.

Please Don't Do This.

I am not on Medicaid, but was for a short time after having been forced into poverty with starvation wages, no insurance and an emergency appendectomy. It took me 6 years to pay the \$33,000.00 medical bills on a starvation wage Montana job.

Don't Do This.

Subject Line: continuous coverage

Please do not end continuous eligibility for some Montana Medicaid recipients. Dependable healthcare is the foundation of a successful life. This is a very cost-effective way to support individuals attempting to improve their situations. People with chronic conditions need the certainty that health issues will not affect their ability to work. Administrative costs to make this change would not be inconsiderable, making it even less effective as a money saving strategy.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. So many Montanans, particularly those with chronic health issues and longterm treatments (like cancer) will be relying on their continued care. Ending this eligibility will cause far more harm and for no good reason.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Read that sentence three more times and you'll see how difficult it is to be clear in our present political climate. Let me be more clear.

I have good medical insurance through my husband's former job in Colorado. I'm lucky. A person shouldn't have to be lucky to get adequate medical coverage. I want ALL of my neighbors in Montana to have the coverage I get by being a former Coloradan. Why not? We can afford to be healthy. We can't afford to be sick. If there's federal money for this, that's our money, too. Aren't we a part of this nation? We can strengthen our own communities. We can stand by each other. We can be a stronger Montana when everyone is healthier.

Always work to expand Medicaid and Medicare. Anyone who tries to cut Medicaid or Medicare, set them straight.

I'm counting on the Department of Public Health and Human Services to live up to its name.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I believe it will be harmful to our lower income citizens in Montana, create an expensive bureaucracy, impact the provision of necessary health care and create unnecessary hardships in maintaining good health for Montanans. No Montana should live without health care.

Thank you,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula , Montana. I am writing to voice opposition to the proposed changes to Montana Medicaid expansion program. Specifically, it is my belief that the proposed change in continuous eligibility for the Medicaid program would be very harmful. This change would cause low income working Montanans to lose their healthcare, make it more difficult for people with chronic illness to visit their doctors, Personally, I am very concerned for people who have a disabling mental illness and receive Medicaid benefits through the WASP program. From my 30 years experience with a relative with mental illness, plus past work experience in the field, I know it is often extremely difficult for those who have mental illness to complete paper work on a timely basis, and even to maintain a stable home address. The possibility of losing coverage for medication, and other treatment because of paperwork deadlines would be

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

extremely harmful. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility for people who qualify for Medicaid expansion and for those with a disabling mental illness in Montana.

This will lead to gaps in health coverage. Other states have studied the impact of coverage gaps and have found that nearly half of adults with gaps have skipped or stopped taking prescription medication. I have experienced gaps in coverage while living in Montana and missed weeks of taking my behavioral health prescription medications. Montana does not have enough behavioral health providers so even after someone gets new coverage it can take months to get an appointment with a provider. I was lucky that my gap only lasted a few weeks but it was incredibly destabilizing. Not having access to my regular provider and medication caused me extreme distress, negatively impacted my mental health and my ability to function. For other people it could lead to a serious mental health crisis landing them in the ER or jail. Lives will be at risk.

I am also concerned about what will replace continuous eligibility. All options will create a burden for people on Medicaid, state employees, or both. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Great Falls, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes in Montana's Medicaid Program. My dad raised me on his own, and has been a hard worker for as long as I can remember. He paints houses and does small contracting jobs for a living, and has even done "odd jobs" like plowing/shoveling snow and raking leaves to try to make ends meet. As an Independent Contractor, his income fluctuates depending on a multitude of factors. These can include how many people have work for him to do, if people have money to fix their properties based on the economy, whether there is exterior work alongside interior work because of inclement weather, and if he can outbid many larger construction businesses with more financial flexibility. My dad, as a result of his thirty-plus years of work with construction and painting supplies and extreme exposure to unsafe, industrial-level chemicals, has many ailments. This includes Asthma-COPD Overlap Syndrome and chronic pain, on top of fairly common ailments seen in people in their mid-sixties. As a low-income person, he relies on Medicaid to access the healthcare needed to keep him healthy, able to work and spending time doing the things he loves. I remember a time when my dad didn't have access to healthcare, and although I was young I was able to comprehend how difficult and at times, very scary that was. There are plenty of hardworking Montanans just like my dad who also rely heavily on being able to access Medicaid year-round, regardless of their seasonally-dependent income levels. This would only make life harder on so many Montanans, already struggling to get by. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Public Comment amendments to the current 1115 HELP and WASP Waivers
We wish to submit the following public comment regarding the above mentions amendments:

Poverty is a complex and insidious determinant of health caused by systemic factors that can persist for generations in a family. Life is unstable for many low-income families. This instability is marked by uncertain and irregular employment, erratic work schedules, fluctuating public benefits, shifting household composition, frequent housing moves, and other changes that undermine not only their precarious finances but also, evidence suggests, the health and well-being of themselves and their children.

Those experiencing poverty often have higher rates of chronic disease and difficulty navigating health care systems. This amendment would further add to the instability of these families by adding barriers to health and healthcare for many of our families because of the requirements of reporting by individuals enrolled in this program.

Many of our members will forgo care because of the cost care after the loss of coverage. Lack of access to medical care is a significant public health concern and equates to higher costs in the future. For these reasons and others, these amendments are opposed by the Little Shell Tribe Health Department.

Hopefully, Our voices matter! I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Please consider my opinion w/o retribution. To end continuous eligibility is just seemingly another way to cripple the already crippled. To victimize the already victimized. All it would do is cost the state more money to implement such - and in the end would only serve to harm the ALREADY HARMED ENOUGH!

Subject Line: Medicaid Eligibility
Dear DPHHS,

Please consider this a public comment about the proposed coverage changes to the DPHHS Medicaid rules.

As a provider and a past/present recipient of Montana Medicaid, I am very familiar with many levels of your services and deeply appreciate the boon this service is for Montana.

Please do not cause extra time/stress burdens for Montanans who are struggling to survive by causing unnecessary paperwork. The time tax on the poor is real. Please maintain 12 month eligibility for Medicaid.

As a rare individual who is currently both a provider and a care recipient, this proposal would be damaging for me on both fronts, and make it more likely that I remain on Medicaid for longer. Why would we add more headache for providers, cause disjointed care for Medicaid recipients, and adversely impact their health due to discontinuations in care and increased stress burden on those already struggling financially?

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

As an example, I had a client who was about to re-commence services, then heard that he was briefly not eligible for Medicaid, cancelled the scheduled services, had another relapse on Meth, and is currently very likely to die in their 40's due to complications. This is the type of problem which is less likely without imposing a time tax on vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your services, please do not make people re-prove eligibility more than once every 6 months.

Kind Regards,

Subject Line: Comment re continuous eligibility for Medicaid

Hello,

I oppose the proposed eligibility change to Medicaid eligibility. The proposal does not specify what eligibility parameters will be used in the future. Without this information, no one can make an educated decision about how this change would impact the Medicaid program, staff, people served, or the cost. Historically, eliminating one process without a new process in place, or even planned, creates dysfunction in our government and increases the cost of providing that service. This proposal, as it stands, will create problems and expense that could be avoided with thoughtful planning.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I have family members who use Medicaid.

This will do more harm than good.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. The pandemic is raging on and families are still struggling. People need to have security around health insurance. No one has the time or energy to devote to endless paperwork to prove ongoing Medicaid eligibility. If continuous eligibility ends, more people will fall ill and die because they will become uninsured. Please reject the waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Montanans depend on it to live.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.
Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Rocky Boy, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana especially during the pandemic of COVID-19 delta variant on the rise. Protect your Montanans!! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Rocky Boy, Montana. I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. I have spent my adult life working with individuals with disabilities and know this will disproportionately affect them. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Montana.
Sincerely,

Subject Line: Please Help Medicaid

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This has affected me personally because my daughter was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and has been either in a state of severe depression or mania for the majority of the past 3 years to the point of either not being able to work or being able to only work part time. She has had to be hospitalized two different times for between 1-3 weeks (once for mania and once for suicidal depression). Her depression continued to be so severe that she was advised to undergo electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) because they couldn't find a medication that was effective for her depression. She ended up having 16 sessions of ECT, which finally began to help with her depression somewhat after the 11th session. Sadly it has negatively affected her memory, making applying for, learning a new job and/or resuming her regular self-employment not possible. She has been able to both do some volunteer work and work as a personal caregiver for an elderly couple in the family, but often is unable to go to work 1-3 days/month due to her health challenges. Ending continuous eligibility will cause devastating results for her and others, leading to severely challenging health outcomes that cannot be good for Montana's population.

I truly believe her Medicaid is the only thing that has allowed her to get the medication, hospitalization to keep her alive and safe when she needs it, and professional help that she needs to begin to manage her condition. Continuous eligibility for Medicaid makes it possible for her to work limited hours in a safe and supportive environment, when her condition allows. There are some days she cannot function due to either the debilitating depression or the mania and psychosis. The proposed requirements will make it more difficult, if not impossible for people with disabilities to get the help they need. Additional eligibility or reporting requirements are unreasonable for the people that need Medicaid to manage a chronic illness and those of us that have to help them with the required paperwork, when they are unable to function or complete it independently.

Health care should not be reserved for wealthy able-bodied people. Living on a low income is hard enough, but to do it without access to healthcare can be impossible. These requirements will not help Montana families succeed. New barriers will deny people access to health care when they need it the most. I am afraid my daughter would not be alive today if she hadn't had access to the medical care she needed, thanks to Medicaid.

Please consider my comments on the proposed waiver. The financial gap in our state between those who can afford health insurance and those who do not have access to health coverage is vast. Montana needs to provide healthcare to all its residents so that low-wage workers with serious health conditions have resources when they need them most. No Montanans should live at risk of becoming jobless and without healthcare.

Subject Line: Medicaid rules change

If the state legislature rejected the changes your department is considering, wouldn't that tell you that Montanans do not support changing from continuous eligibility? Aside from the unnecessary cruelty of uncertainty and constant monitoring/reporting, you are creating a paperwork nightmare

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

on top of what has already been onerous. To what advantage? To WHOSE advantage? Should you really be in the business of punishing and shaming Montanans who need the safety net that Medicaid provides? Or providing a disincentive to improve personal financial stability?

I oppose these changes, as apparently did those who attended a recent hearing on this rule change.

Subject Line: Please don't change continuous eligibility!

To whom it my concern,

I am writing to voice my support or the current support for continuous eligibility. I believe this is a crucial part of our current system to give workers some flexibility in times of transition. Taking away this safety net will only leave more people without insurance. Please do not move forward with this action.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hi, I'm a resident of Missoula, Montana 59808, and I'm calling to urge you not to end continuous eligibility for Medicaid. I don't need a callback. Thank you and have a nice day.

Subject Line: Proposed Medicaid eligibility protocol change

I am writing on my behalf and that of my wife, Linda Svendsen, to register or strong opposition to the DPHHS plan to change the terms of Medicaid eligibility for Montanans. Of all the hair-brained, stupid ideas! This is why people cringe when they hear the word "bureaucrat". If the legislature rejected this idea, why in the name of sanity would DPHHS go forward with this change. DPHHS should instead spend their time supporting local health officials who know what they are talking about when it comes to Covid mitigation methods.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

Please, Please do not force a work requirement or eliminate continuous eligibility for Medicaid as conditions of obtaining Medicaid benefits. The people on Medicaid have very rough lives and are doing their best. The vast majority of people want to work and improve their lives. These exceptions to the Medicaid law just adds more stress to their lives.

Thanks,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

I am a Montanan who has worked themselves out of extreme poverty. I have spent the last 15 years as a single parent of three. Having come from an impoverished single parent home myself, and having started my own family while I was still in highschool, the deck was stacked against me. However, I took advantage of the various public aid programs and was able to stabilize my situation. I slowly, but surely advanced professionally, yet each step forward was met with at least one giant step back. Everytime I got a raise or a promotion I lost some sort of aid. The raise in income was completely offset by the sudden expense of a previously covered necessity. To make a long story short, after years of struggling in this way I was finally able to get an education that afforded me a career that paid all of the bills. I am in no way beyond the reach of poverty now; like most Americans I am one adversity away from it. That being said, the only reason I find myself emerging from the bog of poverty is due the grace periods of some aid. The continuous eligibility of medicaid allows people to get a foothold, so that when the expense finally falls on their shoulders they are in a place of stability instead of transition.

Ending continuous eligibility will harm Montanans who are transitioning from poverty, especially as we are all trying to recover from the pandemic. Please do your part to keep this critical piece of medicaid intact.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid waiver

Native Americans should be exempt on this waiver because the federal government reimburses the state at 100%FMAP for Native Americans verses 89-90% FMAP for non Natives.

Subject Line: Medicaid

I totally support continuous coverage for Medicaid recipients. Please maintain current rules.

Subject Line: 12 month Medicaid coverage

Dear Gov. Gianforte

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

My best friend needs Medicaid to survive.

I hope you don't kick him off of it just because Medicaid is a government program serving the type of people that our profit driven health system can't make a profit from, proving that the drive for profit (capitalism) is a parasitic racket. Which should be abandoned for it's primitive brutality, as it has been abandoned in every other developed nation in earth.

Subject Line: eligibility for medicaid

as a a constituent, i urge you to maintain current eligibility rules for medicaid.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

Hi my name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, MT and I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. I am a social worker in the community where I work at Mountain Home Montana and the YWCA Missoula, supporting vulnerable families that have experienced domestic violence, homelessness and poverty for most of their lives. They heavily rely on Medicaid to support their health and mental health needs and creating more barriers for them to receive this support will make it more difficult for them to receive the care that they need. Not only do many of my clients rely on Medicaid, I also rely on Medicaid for my personal healthcare needs and hope you will consider the many Montanans this proposed waiver will affect. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Butte. As a social worker in Montana since 2000, I have witnessed firsthand the devastation caused by budget cuts to services for our most vulnerable populations. Without support and assistance, many people with special needs and conditions lose their benefits in the best of circumstances. Now the state of Montana is considering adding the extra burden of continuous eligibility without strengthening the safety nets around the people who need it the most. I predict a rise in issues with people with mental illness and homeless individuals and an increase in services being provided in inappropriate settings such as jails and emergency rooms. This will ultimately cost the state, cities and counties and individual communities much more than providing continuous Medicaid for eligible individuals. Reject this unnecessary and costly waiver. Thank you.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Healthcare is a basic human right and we should not be trying to deny it to the poor and middle income Montanans who need it.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Making it harder for the disabled to continue to receive benefits and Healthcare is wrong. To make a real difference, tax those who make over 400k - THEY are the real welfare queens.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Creating more hassle and headaches for the folks who need this vital access to healthcare, AND creating more hassle and headaches for the state employees tasked with processing additional paperwork seems like a lose-lose situation for Montanans.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. There seems to be some idea this would save Montana money. I can tell you, all this would do is SHIFT the responsibility for low income Montanans health from Medicaid to local hospital emergency rooms. As a healthcare worker I see this DAILY. People without insurance utilize the ER much more, and when they finally seek care they are generally sicker, requiring more resources, staff, hospital beds, to get them back on their feet.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Kicking people off to save pennies would result in exorbitant increases in unpaid bills to local hospitals that are already strained due to Covid. Please choose to keep continuous eligibility, for the benefit of low income Montanans and healthcare workers.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid

I have schizophrenia and a co-occurring disorder and I rely on Medicaid to cover the mental health services that I need and other medical expenses... I am hoping that people who need Medicaid will not lose their coverage but I strongly believe that some changes need to happen. The system defeats its own purpose because of the caps on our wages and savings, that haven't changed in well over 30 years... The cap for what I can have in a bank account has been \$2,000 the whole time but I am not sure about wages. I think that these caps need to be caught up to date, in correlation with the increases of the minimum wage, inflation, etc.. When I am doing what is suggested by my mental health providers, take my meds as prescribed, am not doing any using/drinking and I get help with my vocational goals, I should be able to get some money saved and to be successful.. I believe that this is what my support systems are there for... I see no valid reason why "higher functioning" people who have mental illness cannot work part time, when they are doing what is suggested... The Covid-19 panic screwed me up and has set me back but I am determined to "get on my feet," and to continue with my recovery!!! I have gotten a job with help from Voc-Rehab and Opportunity Resources, I am not working very many ours but when I am ready, I may be able to work more hours!!! Please take these things into consideration... Thank you...

Mary Eve, my name is [REDACTED]. I'm in Bozeman. My cell is [REDACTED]. No need to call me back but I'm calling you because of an article in the paper today on Medicaid and the department taking comments on doing away, on changing the current Medicaid procedure for continuous Medicaid. I am extraordinarily opposed to making that change that the department is now considering where people have to report more frequently what their earnings are and may be bumped off Medicaid for a month if they make more than a certain amount. I think it plays havoc with somebody's medical care and could interrupt a continuous flow of treatment that's necessary for good health. It's silly. It's dangerous and harmful to Montanans. So if you're recording comments, please record mine. [REDACTED]. Thank you. Bye.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Billings, Montana. I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Helena. Ending continuous healthcare will hurt Montanans. This change increases barriers to healthcare hurting low income Montanans and making it harder for people with chronic illnesses to see their doctors. It will lead to negative health outcomes at a time when we can least afford to stress our healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

Keep continuous eligibility for Medicaid! Cut the red tape around health care.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Florence, Montana. I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. This change will waste time and create mounds of unnecessary paperwork. Some people with seasonal employment may lose crucial healthcare that will shorten their lives or lead to suffering.

The current system is not broken. Keeping yearly reviews is the best policy, but if that is not possible, twice-yearly reviews should be the maximum.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. I cannot see a reason to make it more difficult to access health care. It's already hard enough.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in whitefish Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. This affects me personally because I am a self employed [REDACTED]. Most of my work is in the summer months. If I cannot keep my health care because I earn more for a few months it will be devastating to me. Ending continuous eligibility will cause harm and lead to negative health outcomes. This is bad for Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Comment regarding the MT DPHHS to end 12 month continuous eligibility

To whom this concerns,

My name is [REDACTED], and I'm a resident of [REDACTED]. I am also a member of the Montana chapter of The Poor People's Campaign. It has come to our attention that under the direction of Governor Gianforte, the Montana DPHHS is asking federal Medicaid for permission to end 12 month continuous eligibility—not just for working folks, but for people who qualify for Medicaid because they experience severe mental illness.

I'm not going to mince words: what we have seen coming out of the Gianforte administration and

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

the 2021 legislature is an utter disregard for the poor and low-wage working people of Montana. Not only do I find the threat to thousands of Montanan's health care access morally reprehensible, I also find this policy strategy economically shortsighted. Nearly 100,00 Montanans get coverage through HELP, and nearly 2 in 3 Montana businesses rely on it to provide health insurance to their employees. By DPHHS's own admission, this proposed new bureaucracy would result in thousands of Montanans losing their health insurance and having their care interrupted. The costs to Montanans who lose their coverage, and to the hospitals and clinics that serve them, would be \$24 million, by DPHHS's own estimates. A lack of insurance is a burden on everyone via our public and private institutions.

It makes zero sense to take an effective program and make it less efficient, less fair, and more bureaucratic. Those who get health insurance through the market place (privately or through work) renew their insurance once a year. Why the discrimination against those who, for a host of reasons, get subsidized to have the same access to care?

My family just recently got healthcare through the special open enrollment period, and my 18 month old son was eligible for Healthy Kids Montana/Medicaid. Since he was born, my partner and I have had to bear the financial brunt of having to pay out of pockets the cost his regular wellness care, including early childhood vaccines. We are a low-wage earning family that contributes to the community. But we also are incredibly grateful not to have to chose anymore between paying regular check-up bills and putting food on the table for our kid. If for some reason my partner's wages were to increase just slightly mid year, that peace of mind and financial relief would be stripped away from us. That is not a dignified way to live.

Thank you for taking into consideration mine and the public's comments on this issue. My hope is that the DPHHS will take a course of action that benefits those it serves and keep making Montana a place where people like my family can not only (barely) survive, but thrive.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. If you believe in smaller government, and less intrusion into private lives, a yearly update should be all right.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED]. I live in Montana City, Montana.

I strongly oppose the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program ending continuous eligibility. I have an adult son with a serious mental illness who has received great assistance from Medicaid by providing him access to medications that have helped stabilize his illness so he can have a more functional life. He has faced difficulties keeping full-time employment at times as his illness has required hospitalizations and years of recovery from serious health setbacks. I fear these changes could cause my son great harm and lead to very serious negative health outcomes. This is

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

bad for my son. This is back for so many Montanans. It is shameful that the health department is attempting to take away health benefits from the Montanans who need them the most. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: empty

Health care should be a human right. As someone who is disabled and on limited income, why do you make it so difficult to get affordable coverage? It's cruel and obviously that's the point!

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. All Montanans need reliable access to good medical care regardless of their income. Especially those in low income jobs, or no jobs. We can't have a healthy economy without healthy employees. Please don't make it difficult, or impossible, for Montanans to be healthy and gainfully employed. Protect everyone by protecting this category of Montanans.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Medicaid Continuous Enrollment

Please reverse, discontinue, or eliminate all initiatives, efforts to change enrollment in Medicaid to "continuous". Changing enrollment eligibility to "continuous" serves no direct, or demonstrated purpose and is without clear evidence for it's intended goal.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment,

Subject Line: DO NOT end 12-month continuous eligibility for Medicaid

Please do not end 12-month continuous eligibility for Medicaid. Mentally ill need this.

Subject Line: Medicare cuts

To who it may concern

Once again our state government is going after the little guy in the state. Once again, we don't value human life though you all say you support pro life until it actually means you have to put some money on the table to help people. Where is this reflected in this bill? Where is the call for government to have your back if u need help in this state. Somehow giving tax breaks to businesses, bailing out oil and gas companies, giving raises to those that work in state government is all ok. But somehow allowing 100,000 people to have Medicaid for a whole year is unacceptable and has to be addressed. Why is this? The state is so broke and we have to continue to make life harder for those that are already struggling. Lets imagine the paperwork involved in taking

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

someone off of Medicaid for a few months and then maybe having them put back on when maybe they qualify again? So in the state of Montana if a single person makes more than \$12880 they are not eligible for Medicaid, If a family of 4 makes more than \$26000 they are not eligible, but this is who we think in our state we shouldn't support? Are you kidding me? This is who we're going to make life more difficult for? Why? Cause u beleive they're getting something for nothing?

I recently heard that 1/2 of Montana's budget comes from the federal government? It appears to me that as independent as Montana's beleive they are they aren't really? Obviously we aren't paying enough state taxes to support the programs we want. But somehow this doesn't help these people are Medicaid, you're still willing to go after them and leave them with no insurance. What do u think they'll do then? Go to an ER and get free services and the hospitals lose out. Seriously, I am disgusted with this administration and legislature that has done nothing but attack the most vulnerable in our communities, attempt to "fix" problems where there are none. Trans girls playing sports, taking away reproductive rights from women, limiting voting access all in The name of a government that is here to support us with our tax dollars.

Shame on all of you for even thinking after the emotional year, bad financial year for so many that this is also what you need to put out there to the citizens of this state that are already struggling.

Subject Line: Do not end continuous eligibility for Medicaid

Please do not end the current 12-month continuous eligibility policy for Medicaid recipients. It is unfair to the recipients, many of whom may work seasonally, or have fluctuations in income due to fluctuations in the number of hours of work assigned by their employers. It is also unfair to the Montana taxpayer, who will have to pay for the unnecessary extra work caused to the State by eliminating the 12-month continuous eligibility. Such a change purports to "fix" something that has been working quite well, adding inefficiencies to a good program for businesses and for the health of all Montanans. Please do not end the current continuous eligibility policy.

Thank you.

Subject Line: HEART Waiver

I am writing in opposition to the elimination of the Continuous Eligibility provision in our present Medicaid program.

The negative impacts on poor, low-income persons by rescinding continuous eligibility far outweigh the benefits of such an action. In fact, given the reduction in health care to Medicaid recipients makes it hard to fathom why Montana legislators would consent to such legislation. Add the need to respond to a pandemic and it is clear that this is not the time to reduce health care to those who are poor. The churn that will be caused will reduce incentives to keep trying to get health care and it will over tax DPHHS with the great increase in administrative effort.

Overall, this move to eliminate continuous eligibility seems mean spirited, given what our State is going through as a result of shutdowns and other threats related to COVID impacts.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Subject Line: Medicaid eligibility review: Not cumbersome or frequent
Hello Linda,

I am writing to you for more information on the new proposals surrounding changes to the state Medicaid plan.

As a private practicing LCPC in Montana, I am financially dependent on having a clear, simple, and easy to navigate system for insurance reimbursement, and recently Montana Medicaid programs have been very helpful, enabling me to achieve financial independence and commit full-time to my new small business. Without Medicaid coverage, this might not be a possibility for me and I might have to close my business. I understand the need to occasionally review Medicaid eligibility, and am hoping to file public comment urging officials to make Medicaid a non-burdensome program in terms of time for proving eligibility, and for eligibility review to occur as infrequently as practicable - a 12 month or 6 month eligibility being much preferable to other frequencies of review.

I realize that I just missed a Zoom meeting on this topic, but would like to be informed as the process goes forward, perhaps you could add me to the mail list for updates to these events? Also, could you please note me as advocating for a simple, infrequent review process?

Kind Regards,

Subject Line: Medicaid Expansion requirements

I am unable to attend the Zoom public meeting tomorrow and would like to provide the following comments in opposition to the Gianforte administration pushing to end 12-month continuous eligibility for Medicaid. Under continuous eligibility, folks qualify for Medicaid based on their average income over the course of a year, so that fluctuations in their income don't kick them off insurance. Not only is this fair it is less costly to administrate.

Under the direction of Governor Gianforte the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is asking federal Medicaid for permission to end 12 month continuous eligibility - not just for working folks, but for people who qualify for Medicaid because they experience severe mental illness.

Do not implement this harmful policy.

There are screenshots of talking points for folks in comments below.

The Montana Budget & Policy Center has determined:

- Ending continuous eligibility threatens thousands of Montanans' health care.
- Republicans and Democrats came together in a bipartisan way to create the HELP program a few years ago, and it has been incredibly successful.
- Nearly 100,00 Montanans get coverage through HELP, and nearly 2 in 3 Montana businesses rely on it to provide health insurance to their employees.
- Ending continuous eligibility just puts red tape between Montanans and their health care.
- Everyone else with insurance renews their coverage once per year, that's just how health insurance works.
- The costs of creating different rules for folks on Medicaid are just too high.
- By DPHHS's own admission, this new bureaucracy will result in thousands of Montanans losing their health insurance and having their care interrupted.
- The costs to Montanans who lose their coverage, and to the hospitals and clinics that serve them,

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

will be \$24 million, by DPHHS's own estimates.

- These changes simply cut the legs out from under Montana families and main street businesses, and a time when they are just starting to get back on their feet.
- It makes zero sense to take an effective program and make it less efficient, less fair, and more bureaucratic.

Thank you for consideration and DO THE RIGHT THING FOR ALL MONTANANS!

Subject Line: Public Comment on Montana Medicaid Expansion 1115 Waiver

My name is [REDACTED]. I live in Montana City, Montana.

I strongly oppose the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program ending continuous eligibility. I have an adult son with a serious mental illness who has received great assistance from Medicaid by providing him access to medications that have helped stabilize his illness so he can have a more functional life. He has faced difficulties keeping full-time employment at times as his illness has required hospitalizations and years of recovery from serious health setbacks. I fear these changes could cause my son great harm and lead to very serious negative health outcomes. This is bad for my son. This is bad for so many Montanans. It is shameful that the health department is attempting to take away health benefits from the Montanans who need them the most. Thank you for your consideration.

Subject Line: Opposition to health care red tape

I oppose the cuts to healthcare for Montanans.

Subject Line: Keep continuous eligibility

To the Montana Department of of Public Health and Human Services:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed change to eligibility rules for Medicaid. This change would cost Montana residents, hospitals, and the state, millions of dollars in extra expenses. It benefits no one and will result in added suffering for those in our population who need help paying for health care.

Let's be in the business of providing health care for people in our state, not depriving those in need. Keep eligibility continuous for the year.

Thank you for your consideration,

Subject Line: Medicaid

Dear Governor....I urge you to not change our current Medicaid structure.

To do so would cause needless suffering and for what?

I'm sure you, as a devout caring Jesus loving Christian would not want your constituents to suffer.

Please don't do something so heartless.

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am opposed to the changes in the Medicaid expansion waiver. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

**Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application**

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without healthcare. Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Continuous eligibility is necessary for low-income Montanans who rely on these benefits. We should be making it easier for Montanans to access health care programs & resources, not more difficult.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Missoula, Montana. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Montana's Medicaid program. Specifically, I believe it is harmful to end continuous eligibility for Montana's Medicaid program. This change will increase barriers to health care for low-income Montanans, kick working Montanans off their health care, and make it harder for people with chronic illnesses to visit their doctors. No Montanan should live at risk of becoming jobless and without health care. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana. So many rural hospitals rely on Medicaid funds. Disrupting continuous eligibility may contribute to the closure of important medical clinics hospitals and services. Our state heavily depends on these funds to keep our medical care going in lower earning communities. Please do not allow for this change to occur. Montana health services depend on us making the right decision on this matter. Do not be afraid to vote in opposition to this proposal.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Mental health and access to insurance coverage

Greetings Governor Gianforte,

As a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in the great state of Montana for the past 15 years I have observed first-hand how access to affordable health care has impacted adults and families in Montana. As a counselor specializing in Trauma and Grief counseling, I see many individuals who are victims of serious trauma and individuals who have experienced the death of love ones due to suicide. As you are likely aware Montana has the highest rates of suicide in the nation especially among our native and veteran populations. If you are interested in changing the fact that our suicide rate is double that of the National average then please know that easier access insurance to help pay for mental health care is imperative!

I am writing to help you understand that when people are victims of trauma, are grieving or struggling with a serious physical or mental diagnosis it is already very difficult for them to do daily tasks, so the new requirement to apply for health insurance many times in a year is counter productive and given our suicide rates, potentially deadly. Lives are at risk as a result of the new policy that requires multiple rather than annual applications for insurance. I have sent copies of this letter to my colleagues so they too can send you a note to remind you of the importance of ease of access to affordable health insurance.

Respectfully submitted,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier,

I oppose the waiver to eliminate 12-month continuous Medicaid eligibility. It makes no sense to me that DPHHS' HEART program and waiver support people with severe mental illness, yet this waiver to change eligibility standards would pull the rug out from under them. While the HEART proposal supports Montanans with severe mental illness, DPHHS proposes to give with one hand and take with the other. The Department's waiver proposal to end 12-month continuous eligibility will

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Section 1115 Demonstration Amendment Application

jeopardize folks' very access to the supports and services described in the HEART proposal. It would interrupt continuous mental health treatment and could result in a failed treatment program. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards, [REDACTED] Helena/East Helena

Subject Line: Reject waiver to end continuous eligibility in MT

Dear Director Adam Meier, I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed waiver to end continuous eligibility in Montana.

Sincerely,

Subject Line: Stop harming Montana's!

I oppose stopping health care to Montana. Your not on our side Gianforte.

Subject Line: Healthcare

Why do you want to take Healthcare away? Making things like Healthcare available improves the overall health of the people. It is your job!

I am in opposition to the proposal to end continuous eligibility on the Medicaid program.

Subject Line: I oppose Gov Gianforte's rule change on Medicare

Gov. Gianforte: I read with interest about your administration's attacks on Montanans who are served by Medicaid. Why force them to reapply for their health insurance multiple times throughout the year?

I have a beloved family member who, through no fault of his own, has a severe mental illness. He is highly intelligent, takes his meds and works so hard to stay balanced. He is an upstanding citizen who plays by the rules. But his mental illness makes it extremely difficult for him to navigate bureaucratic red tape. By forcing him to reapply for his health insurance multiple times a year, your new rule is bound to cause him severe distress and anxiety. I've had to take him to the hospital more than once when his anxiety and distress cause him to get unbalanced. It always involves a long recovery period. Why do you want to torture people like him with this rule change?

I cannot think of anything more anti-Christian than to hurt low-income people and people with disabilities. Jesus told us repeatedly to help the poor and oppressed, not to make their lives more miserable. Please reconsider your harmful rule change.