

# MEDICAID COVERAGE:

## Strengthen it for those who need it most

Vulnerable, low-income populations remain among those most impacted by COVID-19, representing a relatively large share of the deaths and lost employment due to the pandemic. **MEDICAID HAS PROVIDED AN ESSENTIAL SAFETY NET** designed to reduce these widening disparities, ensuring access to needed health coverage to individuals with low incomes and to other select populations, including parents, children, those with disabilities, and individuals receiving long-term care. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) expanded Medicaid, which provided coverage to more than 376,000 additional enrollees in Maryland and D.C.


### Everyone deserves affordable, quality care


As the leading not-for-profit healthcare company serving the mid-Atlantic region, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield has committed to **REDUCING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH DISPARITIES** by acquiring two Medicaid Managed Care plans in the District and Maryland. However, while federal and state governments have taken action to ensure Medicaid is able to meet its members' needs, the pandemic will continue to strain Medicaid's resources.


### CAREFIRST RECOMMENDS *the following steps to ensure the program can support coverage for those who need it most:*

#### 1 Increase federal match for state Medicaid


Against the backdrop of budget shortfalls in both the District and Maryland, the demands on Medicaid programs are more significant than ever. The increased healthcare needs of those affected by the pandemic, combined with the economic downturn and increased unemployment, create an even stronger case for increased Medicaid support. While Congress has increased the federal match for state Medicaid programs by 6.2 percent, CareFirst recommends additional funding through an increased federal match to ensure state governments are able to meet their residents' critical health needs. Without federal funding, state budget shortfalls may grow even larger.

**NATIONALLY,** there are over **74.6 MILLION** MEDICAID/CHIP\* ENROLLEES as of June 2020 


**RISING UNEMPLOYMENT** might increase this by **5-18 MILLION** in the coming months 

**JUNE 2020**  
**MEDICAID/CHIP\* ENROLLEES** 

<b>MARYLAND</b> 1,372,695	<b>WASHINGTON D.C.</b> 248,591
------------------------------	-----------------------------------

**FEBRUARY - JUNE 2020**  
**ENROLLMENT INCREASED** 

<b>MARYLAND</b> 42,035	<b>WASHINGTON D.C.</b> 7,534
---------------------------	---------------------------------

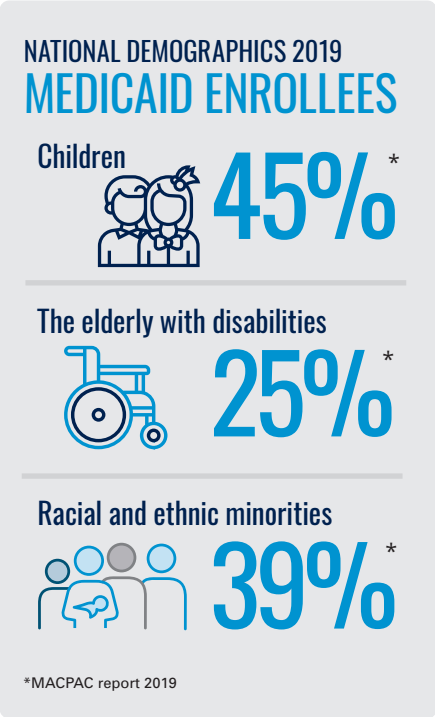
**BUDGET SHORTFALLS** 

<b>MARYLAND</b> \$775 million	<b>WASHINGTON D.C.</b> \$1.34 billion
----------------------------------	--

\*CHIP=Children's Health Insurance Program

## 2 Maintain adequate state funding for Medicaid

Some states have considered reducing Medicaid funding to account for their budget shortfalls during the pandemic. However, cutting Medicaid funding at a time when individuals need coverage the most will significantly impact the health and livelihood of those who depend on the program. State governments must ensure that they can continue to provide their Medicaid programs with the funding needed to support their most vulnerable populations.



## 3 Allow Medicaid plans to deliver whole-person care

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened behavioral health issues that often impact the same vulnerable communities that Medicaid cares for. These issues include heightened feelings of anxiety, depression, social isolation, and relapse. While Medicaid plans are uniquely able to assist these individuals with behavioral health needs, they are often prevented from doing so by state governments who choose to deliver these services separately. These gaps in care easily allow Medicaid enrollees to fall through the cracks, leading to poorer quality care and higher costs. State Medicaid agencies should allow plans to provide the entire range of physical and behavioral health care services to enrollees so that they can receive truly coordinated and whole-person care for all of their needs.

