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**Small Towns in Illinois Will Be Hit Particularly Hard by  
GOP's Proposed Cuts to Medicaid**

*Senator Dick Durbin, Illinois Advocates, & Consumers Decry  
GOP Health Agenda's Impact on Rural Communities*

CHICAGO (IL)—As Congressional Republicans continue to advance an agenda to recklessly repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and gut Medicaid, a new report published this week finds a disproportionate share of children and families living in rural areas rely on these programs for their healthcare coverage.

Released Wednesday, [\*Medicaid in Small Town America: A Lifeline for Children, Families and Communities\*](#) sheds light on the vital role that Medicaid and the ACA play in rural communities and small towns all throughout the state of Illinois. Among the findings:

- 42% of Illinois children in rural areas and small towns receive health coverage through Medicaid and All Kids, the state's health insurance program for children.
- 19% of adults in non-metro areas are covered by Medicaid.
- In some counties, the numbers are even higher. In Alexander County, for example, 63% of children are covered by Medicaid.

At a press event on Thursday, Senator Dick Durbin, researchers, advocates, healthcare providers, and consumers decried federal attempts to decimate these programs.

“Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, more than one million Illinoisans have gained health insurance and our state's uninsured rate has fallen by 49%. People are getting needed care, and providers are being compensated for their services,” said Senator Durbin. “TrumpCare would spell disaster for Illinois' rural communities—for the families and children who live there as well as the hospitals and community health centers who provide care there.”

“Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act have served as crucial lifelines in small towns and rural communities all around the state of Illinois,” said Larry McCulley, CEO of [SIHF Healthcare](#). “These programs not only help connect children and adults to the care they need to lead healthy, productive lives—but they also support community hospitals and local jobs.”

While rural areas and small towns in Illinois have benefited disproportionately from Medicaid and the ACA, both programs have been a boon for the entire state, driving the uninsured rate to a





historic low, bringing in tens of thousands of jobs, and improving the quality of care for millions. The GOP's health agenda threatens to destroy that progress—all in service of tax cuts for the rich.

Senator Durbin continued, “TrumpCare—in order to provide huge tax breaks to big corporations and the wealthiest among us—would slash funding for Illinois’ Medicaid program, threatening health care for children in rural communities and imposing a serious financial burden on the institutions who serve them. This report sheds light on the grave and far-reaching ramifications of Republicans’ ill-hatched plan, and Illinoisans should pay close attention.”

The threat of the GOP’s health plan comes as Illinois enters its third straight year without a state budget—a fiscal disaster in its own right that has deprived [over 1 million](#) at-risk Illinoisans of vital services. As Illinois faces a fiscal crisis of its own, the GOP’s health plan would make things much worse by slashing billions in federal funding, blowing a hole in the state’s already-ailing budget, and jeopardizing the care of millions. Many of those who have already lost services due to the budget crisis could soon see their healthcare stripped away.

“At a time when Illinois is struggling with creating and passing an adequate state budget that funds critical services to vulnerable populations, the repeal of the ACA and structural changes to the federally funded Medicaid program would further devastate Illinois families in the short- and long-term. This is especially true for rural women and children who rely on Medicaid as their primary path to physical and behavioral health services,” said Sessy Nyman, Executive Director of EverThrive Illinois.

“This report makes clear: TrumpCare is a bad deal for the entire state of Illinois,” said Stephani Becker, Senior Healthcare Policy Specialist at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. “This report underscores the need of Illinois lawmakers, including Governor Rauner, to strongly speak out against the GOP’s disastrous healthcare plan. The physical and financial well-being of millions is at stake.”

The full report, issued by researchers from Georgetown University Center on Children and Families and the University of North Carolina NC Rural Health Research Program, is available at: <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2017/06/06/rural-health-report/>

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