

#IamMedicaid

Toolkit

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A NOTE FROM THE CREATORS OF #IamMedicaid

When Alabama Children First, Alabama Arise, and our partners in advocacy who make up the Healthy General Fund Partnership (HGFP) realized that Alabama would be facing a substantial budget shortfall which would affect Medicaid, we knew we could not stand idly by.

The 2016 legislative session started with a proposed budget for FY2017 that cut a gaping \$85 million dollar hole in Alabama Medicaid. Both the Governor and Medicaid commissioner publicly outlined a series of cuts that would take effect if this budget became reality, including cutting payments to primary physicians, eliminating outpatient dialysis, scaling back drug coverage, and several other service reductions.

The HGFP group is composed of almost 50 statewide and regional nonprofits; “do-gooders” as most would call us. We did not have deep operating budgets to help us combat this problem with an expensive marketing campaign. However, we knew that if we could educate the public about the real-life consequences of this budget shortfall then we could have a chance to create change organically.

We also knew that the word “Medicaid” and its recipients were vastly misunderstood and many times, if you can simply educate people then compassion follows. It was in this idea that the #IamMedicaid campaign was born.

In the end, when the 2017 General Fund budget became law the Medicaid agency received the full funding it needed. While #IamMedicaid served its immediate purpose, we still feel it has a greater need to serve today as our federal counterparts grapple with healthcare coverage for the nation.

Rehabilitating the word “Medicaid” is a long-term problem that will take a long-term solution. Nevertheless, with every recipient’s picture, story, post, tweet, and testimony compassion grows. We truly believe this campaign is something that could help educate the entire nation and hope other states will start one of their own.

We have developed this toolkit to help other states recreate the campaign. It’s simple but if you have questions along the way, we are here to help.

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HOW TO RECREATE #IamMedicaid

1) HASHTAG {YOUR STATE}

It is very important that you add your state's abbreviation to the end of the #IamMedicaid hashtag. Adding your state's abbreviation will ensure that the vital testimonies from your state's citizens remain tied to your state. When talking to state legislators, congressional representatives, and even citizens keeping it local is vital to your conversation and success.

Examples: New York's campaign is #IamMedicaidNY
Georgia's campaign is #IamMedicaidGA

2) #IAMMEDICAID SIGN

Your #IamMedicaid sign is the most important tool to your campaign. Make it your own by adding your state abbreviation to the end of the hashtag, add a description telling participants what the campaign is all about, and make sure to include your social media channels information, as well as, your website. We suggest including a PDF of the sign on your website and JPG of it for all social media channels.

You can download the customizable #IamMedicaid Sign Word document here:
bit.ly/IamMedicaidSheet

3) SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE

Not only is social media free, it's where the people are! One of the steps we recommend taking is setting up your Twitter and Facebook pages using your states hashtag (ie: #IamMedicaidGA). This is important to ensure that there is central hub for all of the stories that will start to float around on social media in your state. You can retweet and share what other people are posting using the hashtag and then reuse those images and stories when the time comes.

Having a website for your state's #IamMedicaid campaign is very important. Just like the social media pages, this will act a central hub for you to collect and share the stories and pictures you are collecting. This is also a good place to direct other partners in advocacy so they can download your #IamMedicaid sign. If your campaign starts receiving press coverage, you can even start a blog. We recommend using an easy to use and inexpensive website builder such as Squarespace and Wix.

The #IamMedicaid campaign started in Alabama with a few social media champions who got the campaign rolling. We tapped a pediatrician and several Medicaid recipients who already had an established following on their social media platforms to kick off the campaign by posting their pictures and stories on their own social media pages. It only takes a spark in the right direction.

4) PARTICIPANT LOG

Keeping a “participant log” will ensure that you have all of your stories and pictures in one place for future use. This is important so that you can start to tweet and post these stories from your states #IamMedicaid social media pages. In addition, if the time comes to show analytics for the campaign you can easily see how many people have participated. Word or Excel work perfectly for this.

We suggest keeping track of the following information: Participant Name, Social Media Channel Used, Date, Post/Tweet Content, and Picture.

TIPS AND EXTRAS

- KEEP IT SIMPLE

The more simple the campaign is to participate in the more likely people are to get involved. For example, asking people to hold a sign and take a picture is simpler than asking them to record a video.

- POTENTIAL CAMPAIGN STARS: MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Doctors and nurses can be some of the most crucial individuals to your campaign. They have access daily to Medicaid patients and are uniquely positioned to encourage their participation in the campaign. They can contribute in two main ways: (1) talking to their patients about the campaign and asking them to participate on their own social media pages or (2) talking to them about the campaign and using their personal social media to share the patient's story with the patient's permission. They can also lay out the #IamMedicaid sign in their office lobbies for patients to see as they come for appointments.

*For option 2, using a photo release form is recommended.

- HASHTAG USE

If your state is already using a hashtag to follow political or Medicaid stories be sure to use that hashtag in addition to your state's #IamMedicaid tag. This will help your campaign be seen by audiences that might not see it otherwise.

In Alabama, the hashtag #ALpolitics was already widely used to talk about all political stories and happenings and when we added that to all our posts a wider audience saw the campaign.

- PARTICIPANT PICTURE POSTERS

It's important to get your participants pictures seen as much as possible. One way to increase viewership is using poster boards. If there is an event, such as, a legislative committee meeting or press conference, that is relative to your campaign you can set up poster boards along the hallway leading to the event or even around the room.

Here are examples of what we did:



- PARTICIPANT PICTURE FLIERS

In addition to the posters, you can create fliers to put in mailboxes, tape to doors, hand out at events, etc. You can include all of the logos of the organizations who are working on the campaign and all pertinent information to the campaign (ie: website and social media pages).

We used this template but had several versions using different pictures:

