



**For Immediate Release
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Community Solutions Offers Soundbites on Importance of Medicaid During Pandemic

CLEVELAND, OH – The Center for Community Solutions is keeping a close eye on how Medicaid, often called a “first responder” in public health, can help “flatten the curve” of the coronavirus – ensuring that the health care system isn’t overwhelmed. Loren Anthes, the Treuhft Chair for Health Planning at The Center for Community Solutions, explains in a series of virtually-recorded videos, why Medicaid is a crucial tool in the fight, some of the positives we’ve already seen and things we hope to see moving forward.

Among the positives we’ve already seen in the fight against coronavirus Anthes cites, includes an increase in resources from the federal government and why Ohio’s increasing access to telemedicine is so important.

He also suggested some additional things Community Solutions would like to see including automatic coverage for anti-viral medications or treatments associated with COVID-19.

Please download and use the videos if you find them useful for your coverage. There is a transcription of each video, with time codes and total run times, on the second page of this release.

If you would like to speak with Anthes or schedule an interview please call or text Dani Carlson at 216-282-4583 or email dcarlson@communitysolutions.com.

**Please find a shared folder to download the clips at:
<https://commsols.com/032320MedicaidCOVIDPressKit>**

Transcriptions on Next Page

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Transcription of video soundbites with time codes and total run times (TRT)

Video 1: Comm Sols Medicaid COVID 1

:01 Medicaid is often referred to as a first responder in public health. Typically when we're talking about any public health issue -- whether that's something like infant mortality or the opioid use disorder crisis -- Medicaid is the first to step in. And in the case of this global pandemic, a lot of individuals already are going to be relying on Medicaid to get access to screening and testing and treatment, but especially as there's a greater strain on the economy, Medicaid is going to step in and play a role for those individuals who may lose their normal source of coverage through their employer. **(TRT 35)**

Video 2: Comm Sols Medicaid COVID 2 So Far

:01 Some of the positive things we've seen so far in the Medicaid program have been an increase in resources from the federal government which has a number of positive impacts. Number one it helps the health system respond to the emergent need that the COVID presents, and number two it helps stabilize economies which is something that we know from recessions past and economic downturns in the past that is very positive. We've also seen the State of Ohio implement some policies, number one opening access to telemedicine. **(TRT 33)**

:34 A lot of people who may be receiving treatment in traditional settings, whether their therapist's office or their doctor's office, will now be able to get those services over the phone or on the internet and that will maintain a continuity of care while decreasing the pressure on the health care system as it tries to respond to the epidemic. We've also seen elimination of renewals. So, typically in Medicaid you have to apply every year to maintain your coverage, that has been suspended. It's something that we were very interested in seeing happen and that has two benefits to it. Number one is that people are able to maintain coverage and therefore if someone gets sick or they need access to services they're not going to have that coverage interrupted. And then secondarily, it protects case managers at local county offices who would normally be processing those applications. So it's going to have a good public health impact in flattening the curve as we like to say by decreasing the potential for spread. **(TRT 59)**

Video 3: Comm Sols Medicaid COVID 3 Adjustments

:01 I think that there are some additional things that we could try to do as a state and in partnership with the federal government. Specifically, I think we should try to suspend any of the current eligibility restrictions that many states have been pursuing or the current efforts by the federal government to tighten up the eligibility process and make it more restrictive. Those are things that we can do right now and I think with the federal legislation there was some relaxing of those rules but I'd like to see it more widespread. I don't think we need

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work requirements right now, I don't think we need cost sharing. I'd like to see for example prior authorizations for drugs go away, I'd like to see copays for drugs go away, I'd like to see automatic coverage for any anti-viral medications or treatments associated with COVID be automatically available to folks if and when they do need treatment. **(TRT 54)**

:56 Medicaid is going to play a role in people's lives for awhile. and our hope is that whatever benefits or coverage limitations there are in place today are eliminated, and that people who need the access because they may be suffering through this economic situation are able to access the program quickly. **(TRT 17)**

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