**Medicaid Work Requirements – The Basics**

**WHAT**

* The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that it will support states wishing to use Medicaid waivers to establish work requirements (referred to as community engagement) for some beneficiaries.
* Kentucky became the first state to get federal approval to add a work requirement.

**WHAT IS TENNESSEE DOING ABOUT MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENTS?**

* There are two bills currently before the Tennessee General Assembly about requiring Medicaid recipients to work: SB 1728/HB 1551 by Senator Bell and House of Representatives Speaker Harwell and SB2464/HB2124 by Senator Roberts and Representative Williams currently before the Tennessee General Assembly**.**
* ***SB 1728/HB 1551 is on the Calendar for the February 14 Health Subcommittee****.* This bill direct the commissioner to submit a waiver to impose reasonable work requirements upon able-bodied working age adult enrollees without dependent children under the age of six.
* SB2464/HB2124 would require the commissioner of finance and administration to seek a waiver amendment to the TennCare II waiver to require participation in work or related activities by certain enrollees.

**THE ISSUES WITH WORK REQUIREMENTS**

* Work requirements would undermine TennCare’s core goal of providing health coverage to people who cannot afford to pay for the medical care they need.
* Denying people Medicaid coverage would penalize those in most need of the support TennCare provides.
* It would erect new barriers to health care which will likely be costly to the state and ineffective at increasing employment.
* Work requirements will disqualify many individuals from Medicaid coverage.
* For those with disabilities currently on social security and receiving Medicaid, the requirements reduce incentives to work.
* This policy will enable continued workplace prejudices and stereotypes about Medicaid recipients and people with disabilities.

**THE REALITY/THE FACTS**

* Most adults on TennCare already work.
* The majority of those who do not work have health conditions that prevent them for working, are caring for children or a sick family member, or are in school.
* Some people will inevitably fall outside the state's definition of “disabled”—even if they have disabilities that limit them from working.
* Even if an individual is exempt, work requirements will create increase red tape that may result in people losing coverage.
* Individuals will have to verify their qualifying disability, which may make it more difficult to apply for and stay enrolled in Medicaid.