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Seven Leading National Organizations Applaud Judge for Blocking Harmful Medicaid Work Requirements

Washington, D.C., March 28, 2019 — In Kentucky and Arkansas, a U.S. District Court Judge ruled for the second time against taking Medicaid coverage away from people who do not meet work requirements. Judge James Boasberg ruled that employment conditions do not advance Medicaid's basic purpose of providing health coverage, indicating that "The Court cannot concur that the Medicaid Act leaves the [HHS] Secretary so unconstrained, nor that the states are so armed to refashion the program Congress designed in any way they choose."

Seven leading national medical, consumer and health advocacy groups who had previously filed an amicus brief in the Kentucky case, which was cited by the Judge in his ruling on the state's work requirement, issued the following statement in response to the decision:

"Medicaid plays a critical role in our nation's health care system. We applaud the Court's decision to invalidate a harmful change to Medicaid that caused people to lose health coverage. We know that conditioning eligibility on employment has led to mass disenrollment in Medicaid and poor health outcomes in other social programs. The barriers and penalties imposed through Medicaid work requirements unjustly penalize those seeking to work or who are already gainfully employed. People who cannot access medical care and improve their health status will face challenges entering the workforce.

"We are grateful that the Court affirms what we all know – that taking away Medicaid coverage won't improve the health of individuals, families, our communities, or our economy; it will only destabilize families' financial security and jeopardize their ability to access the care they need. Rather than adding more barriers to health care services, our federal and state governments should be improving access to care by keeping Medicaid strong."

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National Alliance on Mental Illness