



PRESS RELEASE

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Jacksonville, Florida — A federal judge **found that Florida’s Medicaid notices “border on the incomprehensible,”** and has ordered Florida’s Medicaid agency to immediately pause the termination of Medicaid benefits until it can implement clear, comprehensive notices to address significant due process violations established by plaintiffs in *Chianne D. et al v. Jason Weida*. Florida Health Justice Project and the National Health Law Program (NHeLP), representing Florida families, brought this case against the state for its confusing Medicaid termination notices that left enrollees without critical health care coverage and with little recourse to appeal those terminations, resulting in over half a million Floridians losing access to care.

Read Decision

The lawsuit, filed in August 2023, demonstrated that the state’s Medicaid notices entirely fail to explain why their health care is being terminated. In yesterday’s decision, Judge Marcia Morales Howard agreed, stating that the notices “can be described in many ways—confusing, vague, convoluted, antiquated, contradictory, inaccurate, and ambiguous—but they are unequivocally not an objectively reasonable form of notice.”

Families testified about struggling to determine whether anyone in the household was even losing coverage, or what specific factors led to the State’s decision. Under-resourced call centers, with restrictive hours, long wait times, and untrained staff, exacerbated this confusion. These communication gaps resulted in Floridians in need of health care, including pregnant people and weeks-old infants, losing coverage and missing critical treatments. The Court emphasized “[t]he vague, convoluted, and misleading [notices] cause

real harm in the form of lost time, stress, anxiety, and in some cases, the erroneous termination of benefits.”

“This ruling is a victory for the millions of Floridians who rely on Medicaid for essential health care. Medicaid agencies inevitably make mistakes when deciding eligibility. Clear, easy-to-understand notices are essential to catch and correct those mistakes before someone loses health care. The Court’s decision will ensure that Floridians have that critical protection from now on,” says Sarah Grusin, Senior Attorney at the National Health Law Program. “It also underscores that states cannot shirk their constitutional obligations. Florida has known about the problems with their notices for years but has not addressed them, citing the cost and complexity of making changes to the computer system that generates notices. But as the Court emphasized, state officials cannot justify violating the constitutional rights of their citizens because they claim the fix is too expensive.”

The Court’s ruling orders a pause in certain Medicaid terminations statewide until the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Florida’s Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) revise the notices to clearly explain the reason for termination. It also requires the State to provide accurate notices to class members whose Medicaid coverage was terminated between March 2023 and now, and provide them the opportunity to appeal. These moves will benefit hundreds of thousands of Floridians.

“Thanks to the bravery of four moms who came forward to testify about the impacts on their families, this ruling forces the State to communicate clearly with Medicaid enrollees—which it should have been doing all along,” says Lynn Hearn, Legal Director at Florida Health Justice Project. “These changes are long overdue and will be a breath of fresh air for the millions of families who’ve struggled to navigate Florida’s confusing and error-prone Medicaid system.”

The collaboration between NHeLP and Florida Health Justice Project is a key factor in this impactful outcome. This [Health Law Partnership](#) draws on NHeLP’s extensive national expertise in health law and Florida Health Justice Project’s deep local roots in advocating for Floridians’ health care rights.

“This partnership uniquely strengthens our work because it combines national experience with targeted, on-the-ground legal advocacy,” says Jerson Dulis, Executive Director of Florida Health Justice Project. “Our partnership brings together resources and expertise to confront systemic issues in Florida Medicaid, ensuring that Floridians’ rights to due process and health care access are protected.”

The National Health Law Program and Florida Health Justice Project remain committed to protecting the rights of low-income Floridians to secure their Medicaid benefits.

INFORMATION FOR IMPACTED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

This ruling applies to individuals enrolled in Family-Related Medicaid (parents, pregnant individuals, and children) who lost Medicaid because of income. DCF may not terminate individuals from Family-Related Medicaid because of their income until it updates its notices. [Access this factsheet to learn more about who is affected.](#)

As part of the ruling, families who lost Medicaid after March 2023 due to income and who are still without Medicaid coverage will have a new opportunity to appeal their termination through a fair hearing and an opportunity to have past medical bills paid if DCF made a mistake. The Florida Department of Children and Families is required to contact impacted individuals and families in the next 60 days with the next steps regarding their Medicaid coverage.

Advocates in Florida should keep their clients aware of the changing situation and be on the lookout for additional information from Florida Health Justice Project.