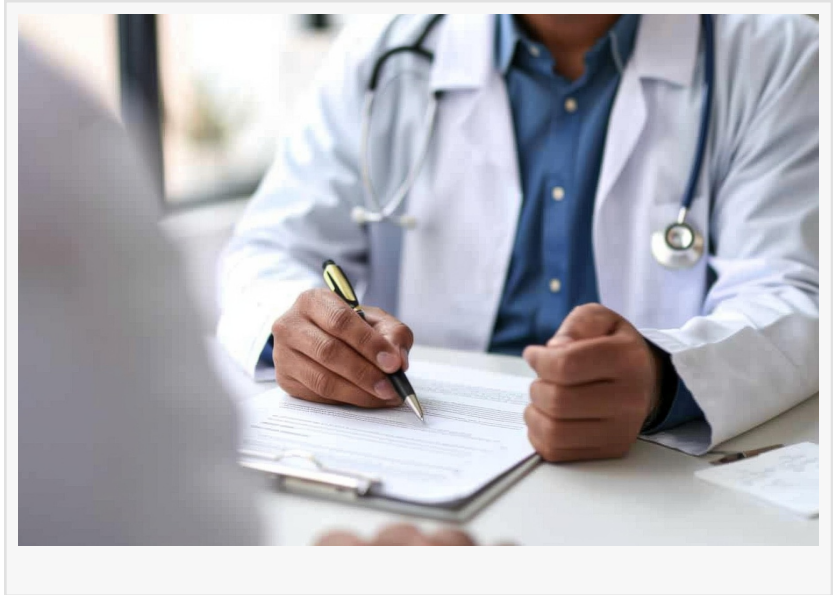


# Battling New Medicaid Cuts and Rising Healthcare Costs: Early Identification of Health Destabilization is Key

*Improvements in education and health-tracking software promise to reduce healthcare costs in the face of budget cuts.*

CLEARWATER, FL, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the recent approval of nearly \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts over the next 10 years, healthcare providers nationwide are seeking new ways to optimize patient health in the wake of dwindling budgets. New developments in health education and technology are helping to decrease healthcare costs while improving the health of patients with disabilities.



Among those who stand to be most affected by Medicaid cuts are people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). People with IDD rely heavily on Medicaid to cover home and community-based services (HCBS). HCBS Medicaid waivers provide a range of services and supports to enable people with IDD to live more independent lives. Some examples include personal care assistance, help with household chores and meal preparation, modifications to homes for accessibility, and transportation.

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*Dr. Craig Escudé, President of IntellectAbility*

About 4.5 million people receive Medicaid-covered home services annually. While these programs are important for the overall health and well-being of people with IDD, the

role that HCBS providers play in keeping down healthcare costs is often overlooked. HCBS support staff, like direct support professionals (DSPs) and case managers, are the first line of defense against health destabilization. As health conditions worsen, the high cost of ER visits and emergency medical procedures puts an increased burden on shrinking Medicaid funds.

Misdiagnoses can result in inaccurate treatments, causing more harm than good. Diagnostic overshadowing, or the attribution of symptoms to an existing diagnosis rather than a potential treatable, underlying condition, has also led to increased health risks and costs for people with IDD. Additionally, misconceptions about the quality of life of people with IDD combined with a lack of education in the specialized care of these individuals often lead to misdiagnosis and, in turn, improper treatment plans.

“Most health professionals are not adequately trained to address the unique healthcare needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Comprehensive training is essential to recognize when behaviors may signal underlying, treatable medical conditions; to understand the most common and preventable causes of illness and death; and to avoid the serious complications that can result from overprescribing unnecessary behavioral medications,” says Dr. Craig Escudé, physician specializing in IDD and President of IntellectAbility. “Educating healthcare providers promotes more targeted interventions that can lead to more cost-effective healthcare.”

IntellectAbility® provides tools and training to aid managed care organizations (MCOs), healthcare workers, direct support professionals, and case managers in recognizing the unique presentations of common medical conditions that can lead to death, including aspiration, constipation, bowel obstruction, seizures, dehydration, and sepsis. Early detection of these conditions is key to reducing healthcare costs and enrollment in Medicaid-funded programs.

Some common warning signs of health issues destabilization include:

- \* A change in baseline behavior is often an early indicator of an underlying medical issue.
- \* Agitation around mealtimes may signal nausea, potentially as a side effect of medication.
- \* Heartburn or reflux can manifest as aggressive behavior before, during, or after meals.
- \* Symptoms of anxiety may actually reflect chest pain or low blood glucose levels.
- \* Withdrawal and decreased appetite could be signs of constipation.

“Technology such as the Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST®) plays a vital role in improving the early detection of health destabilization in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” states Dr. Escudé. “By systematically identifying risk factors and subtle changes in health status, tools like the HRST empower caregivers and clinicians to intervene earlier, often preventing more serious and costly medical complications down the line. This proactive approach not only improves health outcomes and quality of life, but also significantly reduces avoidable hospitalizations and healthcare costs.”

Additional information about how states and HCBS providers can optimize healthcare expenditures can be obtained by downloading IntellectAbility's [new white paper on the subject](#): "Optimizing HCBS & Healthcare Spending for People with IDD During Medicaid Cuts".

IntellectAbility provides tools and training to agencies, governmental entities, and supporters of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to foster early recognition and mitigation of health risks, thereby improving health and wellness. One such tool is the Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST), of which they are the sole developer, producer, and distributor. The web-based HRST is the most widely used and validated health risk screening instrument for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. IntellectAbility also provides numerous health-related and person-centered service training for supporters of people with IDD. With an unrelenting focus, IntellectAbility works to fulfill its mission of improving health and quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other at-risk populations. For more information, visit [www.ReplacingRisk.com](http://www.ReplacingRisk.com)

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