

# Why is Utah Cutting Back Care for Young Adults?

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Written by: Questions?

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***Young adults on Medicaid are being denied dental and vision care, mental health screenings and other benefits, just as they enter the work force and embark on the next chapter of their lives.***

***Baffled by this decision? So are we.***

Utah is proposing [several, unprecedented changes](#) to its Medicaid program. These changes include limits on enrollment, work reporting requirements and per capita funding caps. But here's one issue that has received less attention: **Young adults on Medicaid are being denied their full benefits, including early detection and screening services, dental care, mental health and wellness care (known as the acronym, EPSDT).** The Medicaid Act mandates that individuals enrolled in Medicaid have comprehensive EPSDT benefits up to age 21. The American Academy of

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Pediatric endorses it. But Utah has arbitrarily chosen to cut comprehensive benefits to 19 -20 year olds.

Advocates are told this is a cost-saving measure. But the evidence doesn't back this up. **Early screening and detection services SAVE dollars.** Why is Utah cutting the very benefits that help detect conditions *before* they escalate and cost the state more money?

- **Providing prevention, early detection, and treatment services for young adults insures that health problems are averted or diagnosed--** allowing young adults to focus on furthering their school, work and life.
- **Young adults' brains continue to develop past their teenage years into their 20s.** Access to things like vision, hearing and dental screenings, as well as mental health services, help young adults stay on track at a critical point in their development.
- **Cutting dental benefits for young adults makes it harder for them to find a job.** Individuals living below the poverty level [have reported](#) that the appearance of their teeth and mouth *had a negative effect* on their ability to interview for a job.
- **We are in the middle of a youth suicide crisis. Now is not the time to cut back access to mental health screening and care for young adults.** As 19-20 year olds prepare to make more adult decisions it becomes even more common for mental health issues to arise.

This state does not need to move forward with this harmful decision. It runs counter to Utah's fiscal prudence, focus on cost-effective solutions, recent legislation protecting children's health up to age 21, and *the state's own policies*. The Utah Department of Health actually endorses the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures guidelines, ***which recommend full comprehensive benefits for everyone up to age 21.***

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Many of the proposed changes to Utah's Medicaid program are mandated by Senate Bill 96. **But this isn't one of them.**

Utah has the opportunity to make a different choice, to support young adults as they become more self-sufficient, not turn our backs on them.

TAKE ACTION: Tell the Utah Department of Health to protect comprehensive benefits for 19-20 year olds. Use [this link](#) to submit your comments by June 30th.