



# What Kentuckians Think About *The Importance of Medicaid*

Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky



Medicaid is a health insurance program run by the states that provides healthcare coverage to low-income adults and children. Each state determines its own eligibility guidelines for Medicaid. Kentucky's Medicaid program, called *KyHealth Choices*, has four plans that cover four specific groups of low-income people:

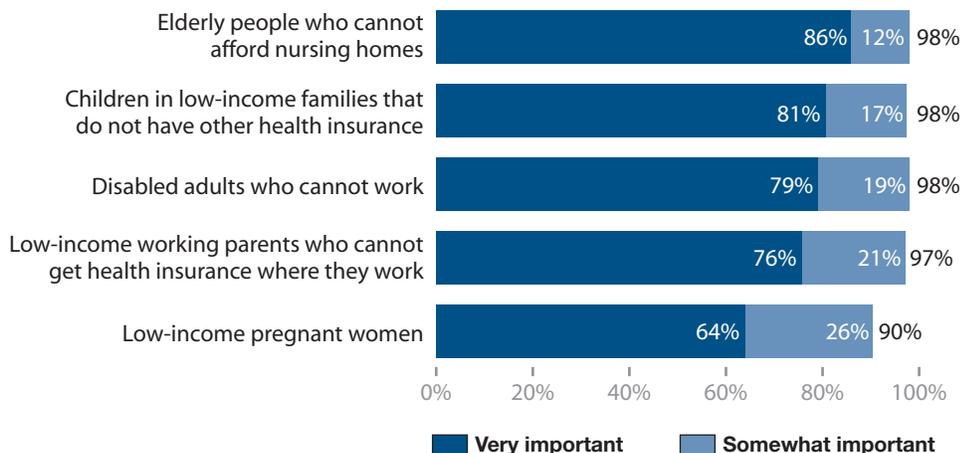
- **Family Choices** covers most children, including those eligible for the state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- **Optimum Choices** covers Kentuckians with mental retardation who need long-term care
- **Comprehensive Choices** covers elderly Kentuckians who live in nursing facilities and Kentuckians with acquired brain injuries
- **Global Choices** covers the general Medicaid population, including low-income adults and certain people with Medicare

For more information on the specific eligibility requirements for each of the *KyHealth Choices* plans, please visit the Kentucky Department of Medicaid Service's web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dms/>.

## The Importance of Medicaid

The 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* found that the majority of

How important is it to you that Kentucky Medicaid provide healthcare coverage to the following groups of people?



Kentuckians think that Kentucky Medicaid is very important for eligible Kentuckians who otherwise wouldn't have health insurance, including elderly people who cannot afford nursing homes, children in low-income families, disabled adults, low-income working parents, and low-income pregnant women.

## Ways to Pay for the Medicaid Program

Like most states, Kentucky is facing budget cuts to its state programs, including Medicaid. The 2008 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* gave Kentuckians a choice of options they would most like to see Kentucky lawmakers choose if the Commonwealth is unable to afford healthcare coverage for everyone who is eligible for the Kentucky Medicaid Program.

Kentuckians preferred to find ways to raise money to pay for Medicaid rather than reducing services or the number of people eligible for the program. In order from the most popular choice to the least, Kentuckians preferred:

- Increasing the tax on cigarettes (50%)
- Cutting other state-funded programs (16%)
- Increasing the state sales tax (11%)
- Increasing the state income tax (10%)
- Reducing the number of adults who receive health coverage through Medicaid (6%)
- Reducing the number of health care services covered by Medicaid (5%)

These findings are from the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*, funded by The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky. The *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* was conducted January 16–February 11, 2008, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 1,632 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to ±2.4%. In addition to sampling error, there are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll*, please visit [www.healthky.org](http://www.healthky.org) or [www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html](http://www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html).