



Stand Up,
Speak Out!

Maria Town
January 9, 2026

Who am I?



Maria Town

Cat Mom

Disability Advocate

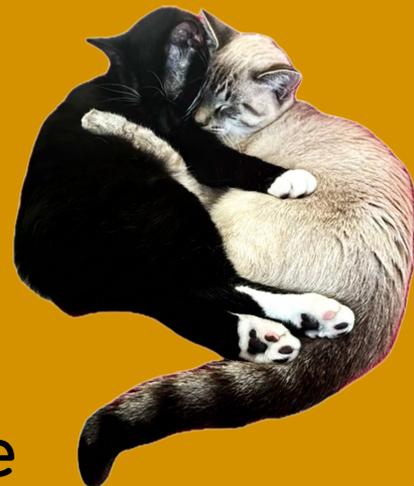
Louisiana Native

President & CEO of



AAPD

American Association of People with Disabilities





My Medicaid Story

I received services through a Medicaid waiver program.

These services helped me and my family.

I went through a redetermination.

I lost my services.

My family and I fought this decision.

We lost.

Why am I telling you this?

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act was passed in July of 2025.

The One Big Beautiful Bill makes many changes to Medicaid.

One of those changes is that people getting medicaid have to go through a **redetermination every 6 months**.

Another BIG change is that some states will have to start having **work requirements** or community **engagement requirements** some people who get Medicaid.

What is a redetermination?



The Core Process

When the state asks you to prove your disability to decide if you can get services.



New Assessments

You may need to get new assessments from doctors or medical professionals.



The Interview

You may also be required to participate in an interview.

What is a work requirement or community engagement requirement?



Work/Engagement Rule

A rule that makes people work, go to school, volunteer, or do other activities in order to keep their healthcare.



Who it affects: Expansion

People who receive health insurance through medicaid expansion.



Who it affects: 1115 Waivers

People who receive healthcare through 1115 waivers.

What does this mean for Louisiana?



- Louisiana started Medicaid Expansion in 2016.
- Close to 500,000 people got health coverage today as a result of Medicaid expansion in Louisiana.
- Medicaid expansion created nearly to 15,000 jobs.
- 7 different 1115 waivers that provide services, medical devices, personal attendant care, healthcare coverage, respite services and more for adults and children with disabilities.

What does this mean for Louisiana?



- The state of Louisiana will have to check to see if people meet work requirements or exemptions when they apply or when they go through a redetermination.
- The state will look back a month of activity.
- If the state says they someone does not meet the requirements, they have to tell you.
- Individuals will have 30 days to meet the requirements.

People will lose
healthcare and
services.

But aren't people with disabilities exempt?

It depends.

All people with disabilities are not exempt from redeterminations or work requirements.

Proposed Qualifying Activities and Exemptions

Qualifying Activities	Mandatory Exemptions	Optional Hardship Exceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 80 hours per month of work, community service, and/or “work program” participation• Enrolled in education at least half time• Any combination of the above totaling 80 hours per month• Monthly income of minimum wage multiplied by 80 hours• Seasonal workers with an average monthly income over 6 months of minimum wage multiplied by 80 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian/caretakers of dependent children under age 13 or disabled individuals• Pregnant or receiving postpartum coverage• Foster youth/former foster youth under age 26• Medically frail• Participating in SUD program• Meeting SNAP/TANF work requirements• American Indians and Alaska Natives• Disabled veterans• Incarcerated or released from incarceration within 90 days• Entitled to Medicare Part A/enrolled in Medicare Part B	<p>State option to allow short-term hardship exceptions, for an individual who...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• was in an inpatient hospital, nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or inpatient psychiatric hospital• resided in a county with a federally-declared emergency or disaster• resided in a county with a high unemployment rate (above 8% or 1.5x the national unemployment rate), subject to a request from the state to the Secretary• traveled outside of the individual’s community for an extended period for medical care for themselves or for their dependent

Exemptions for Work Requirements - What does Medically Fragile Mean?

- The One Big Beautiful Bill Act excludes people who are “medically fragile” from work requirements.
- There is no existing legal/ statutory definition for “medically fragile.”

The bill did specify that “medically fragile” includes the following groups.

- Blind or disabled persons.
- Individuals with serious or complex medical conditions.
- Those with substance use disorders or disabling mental disorders.
- People with physical, intellectual, or developmental disabilities that limit daily activities.

State Discretion: While providing examples, the Act allows states to determine what all of this means.

Key Dates - When will all this happen?

June 1, 2026 - The US Department of Health and Human Services will issue an interim final rule that states have to follow to implement the work requirements and redeterminations.

September 30, 2026 - States are required to reach out to people on Medicaid about work requirements.

January 1, 2027 - Work requirements start.

December 31, 2028 - If states experience issues implementing work requirements, the Secretary of Health and Human Services can give them until this date to implement them.

What can you do?

Get prepared.

Make sure you have your disability documentation ready.

Gather your important documents that provide information about the supports and services that you need. .



Get prepared.

If you work, if you volunteer, if you go to school make sure this is documented.

Pull together things like time sheets, pay stubs, or hours trackers.



What can you do?

SPEAK OUT!



- Reach out to your the Louisiana State Medicaid director.
- Tell them what you and your community need to make communication and all of these processes accessible and fair.
- This can include putting information into accessible formats, offering assistance to fill out forms, and more.
- Encourage the state officials to make exemptions very broad.

What can you do?

Tell your story and help other people tell their story.

If you rely on services and need healthcare, tell your elected officials and policy makers how important these services are to you.

If you lose your services or have lost your services in the past, tell people in power how that impacted you and those you love.

Telling your story can help give other people the courage to tell their story. It's easier when you aren't alone.



What can you do?

Vote and help other disabled people vote!

Disabled people have a lot of power at the polls. Voting shapes things in our everyday life.

REV UP!
REGISTER EDUCATE VOTE
USE YOUR POWER!

REV UP is AAPD's
voting initiative.



Amber Smock

Political Power

POLICY CHANGES

SECTION 504 of ADA

ADVOCACY



DISABILITY POWER



COALITIONS:
BUILDING
POWER WITH
OTHER ORGANIZATIONS



ENGAGING OUR
ELECTED OFFICIALS
IS CRUCIAL

DISABLED VOTERS
KNOW WHAT THEY
NEED

DISABLED
PEOPLE SHOULD BE
ADVOCATING



GRASSROOTS

IT'S NOT ONLY
WHEN THINGS
GO WRONG

DO IT
NOW!

HOLD
PEOPLE
ACCOUNTABLE

GET OUT AND
V-O-T-E

WHAT do
they care
about?

ALSO
BE PRESENT
WHERE THEY
CAN'T BE
IGNORED



BUILD
COMMONALITIES
to BE PART OF THE
POWER STRUCTURE

OUR COMMUNITY IS NOT
AFRAID TO DISRUPT THINGS



ADAPT
IS WHERE WE
ARE STRONG

WE NEED
ALLIES & LEARN HOW TO HAVE
DIFFICULT CONVOS

THINK ABOUT
INCARCERATED
DISABLED VOTERS

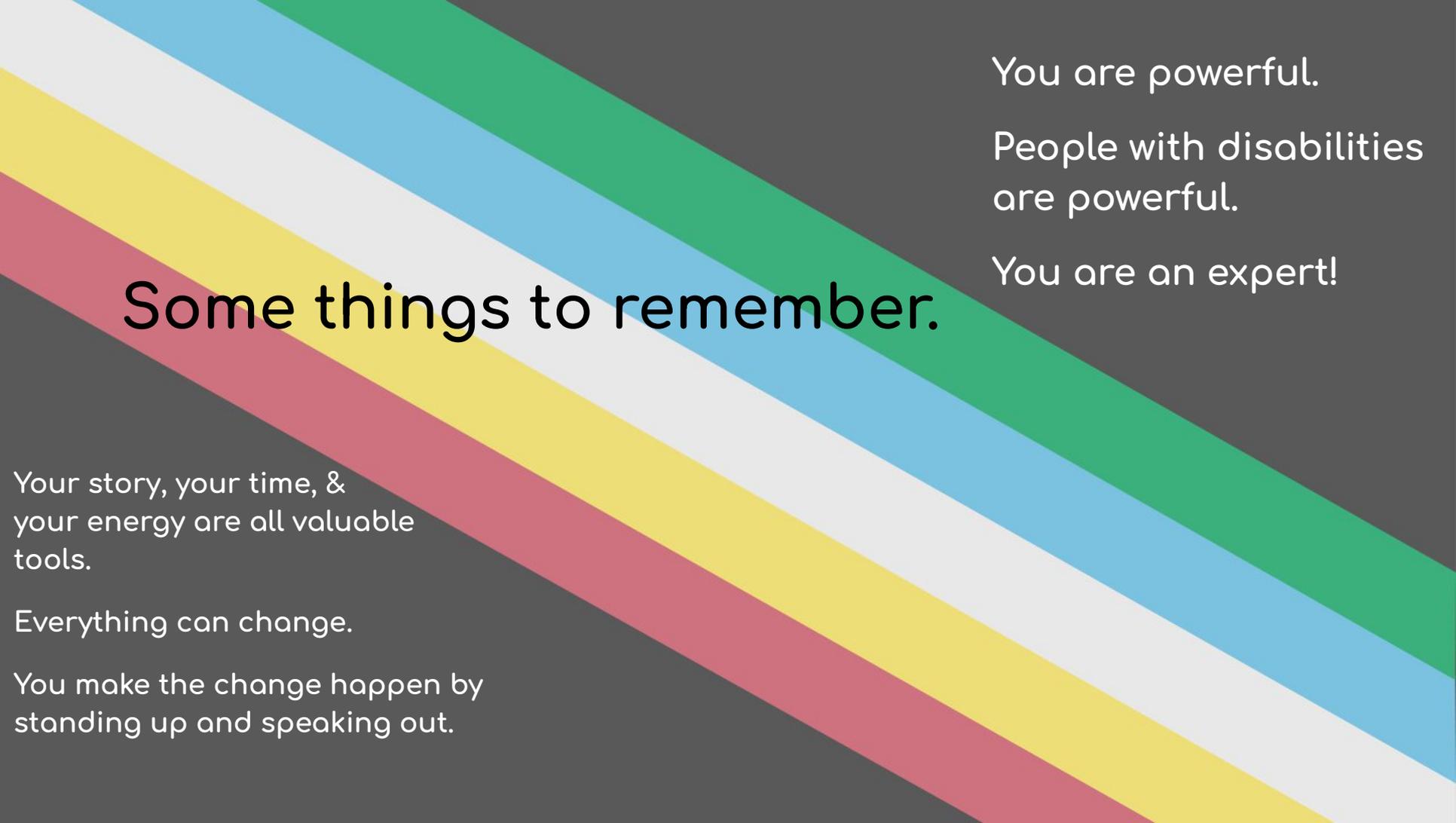
TALK
About
ALL of
US



EMPLOYMENT
for PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

NOTHING WITHOUT US





Some things to remember.

Your story, your time, &
your energy are all valuable
tools.

Everything can change.

You make the change happen by
standing up and speaking out.

You are powerful.

People with disabilities
are powerful.

You are an expert!