

# Health care for working individuals with disabilities

**HB 1199.** Sponsored by Representatives [Cody](#), [DeBolt](#), [Jinkins](#), [Harris](#), [Tharinger](#), [Caldier](#), [Robinson](#), [Macri](#), [Schmick](#), [Stonier](#), [Slatter](#), [Wylie](#), [Tarleton](#), [Frame](#), [Pollet](#), [Riccelli](#)

Individuals with disabilities want to work more hours, but they are afraid of losing their Medicaid benefits. We could change that.

## **We don't have to limit people with disabilities.**

Medicaid is a lifeline for people with disabilities. It covers health care and long-term supports that many rely on to participate in their communities – supports that simply aren't available elsewhere.

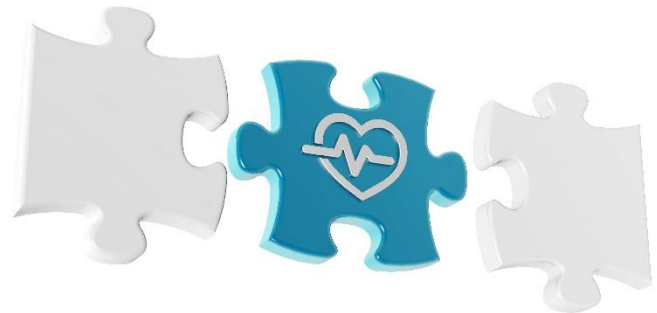
Washington participates in Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities, a Medicaid buy-in program for qualifying individuals. This program incentivizes employment of people who rely on Medicaid for health care and essential long-term supports, such as personal care, or residential and employment supports. Without these services, participants wouldn't be able to work or build relationships in the community. With the buy-in option, they can. It is a successful program that works well for many.

BUT ... **Our state opted to limit income for Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities**, and increasingly people using this buy-in program are hitting those limits. They are being forced to scale back hours or pay or leave the workforce.

Rising minimum wages play into this, as do more opportunities for promotion and increased hours. Something called unearned income is also a factor. If a parent retires or is deceased, their dependent could qualify for Disabled Adult Child Benefits and/or Veterans Benefits. If this puts them over the buy-in lid, they must decide between essential services or their job.

People shouldn't have to choose between employment and the supports that make community life possible.

If you have questions about HB 1199 or HWD, please contact [cmurahashi@arcokingcounty.org](mailto:cmurahashi@arcokingcounty.org)



**As public policy, it doesn't make sense.** If you force someone to leave the workforce, they are even more dependent on social supports. You increase their isolation and they still use Medicaid.

**So why not lift the limits on Washington's Medicaid buy-in program?** Let people pursue the best jobs and salaries available to them. HB 1199:

- Eliminates the income threshold for our state's Medicaid buy-in program
- Allows qualifying people age 65 and over, who want to continue to work, to retain Medicaid coverage.
- Establishes cost-sharing based on income
- Asks for federal approval to create a separate account for assets when determining eligibility for another medical assistance program.

**HB 1199 updates our Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities program so that individuals with disabilities can be more self-sufficient and improve their quality of life.**

This handout was prepared by The Arc of King County in support of advocates working to improve access to Medicaid and employment.

