

My name is Chris Hunnicutt, my son, Christopher, and I both would like to share our thoughts.

From the time his mom and I heard we were to have child with Down Syndrome, we rejected the advice of some professionals, "terminate the pregnancy," and " give up this child to an institution and get on with your lives." Later we heard, "put him in special classes where his needs can be better met and he can be with others like him."

Instead we have had him grow up in our home, having learn to deal with life by having an older sister, going to school with other folks in the neighborhood, being involved to the fullest extent in the daily-ness of living. As a result he is known in the community by folks whom we don't know, and has friends and exposure that some find enviable. He now is dealing with having a job, learning how to get along with coworkers and a supervisor

As of today, Medicaid has helped us as middle class parents by being there to provide medical care when our employer has not always afforded that care. Whether providing general health care, operations to create ear canals so he can hear, or buying hearing aids to increase his hearing, Medicaid has helped provide for his growth, and enhance his competency. Currently, Medicaid resources are also helping us build his life skills and capacity for independence by having him involved with activities that build his learning skills, his social skills, and increasing his involvement with an even wider community. As an emerging adult with a job, likely he will continue to need Medicaid medical coverage since often employers restrict work hours to minimize benefits costs to their businesses. And he and I both want him to work and to be a productive, tax paying citizen (well maybe we don't want tax paying, but we will pay taxes, it's our responsibility).

In the future there will likely be an ongoing, and maybe periodic, need for Medicaid resources. Absent the support you have an opportunity to craft in the future, Chris' future would be more in question and hold much less potential for independence. Please consider the impact on individuals even as you consider the decisions ahead of you.

### Chris' Comments

- I like my life, and want to keep growing to be an independent adult.
  
- I want to have friends, a job, and one day, maybe, a place of my own.

  - I really like to help people but sometimes I need help too.
  - Medicaid has helped in the past; I hope you will make decisions so it will be there to help in the future.
  - When you think about your decisions, I hope you will also think about my face. I am one person of many who will rely on your wisdom to make good choices.