

REALITY CHECK

# THE COSTS OF LIVING FOR MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES IN NORTH CAROLINA



Challenging Math for People Living with Disabling Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders

## WHAT "COUNTS" AS POVERTY?

According to the federal government, poverty is a single person earning \$12,060 or less per year. This equals \$1,005 per month. In North Carolina,

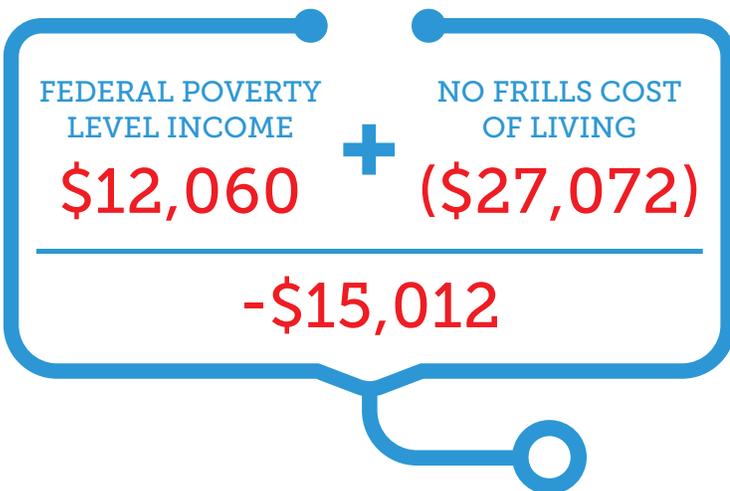
- 1,523,700 North Carolinians live at or below the Federal Poverty Level
- 1,928,700 North Carolinians live between 100-199% of the Federal Poverty Level



## WHO QUALIFIES FOR MEDICAID?

- In North Carolina, individuals with incomes above \$11,772 cannot qualify for Medicaid, unless they receive Social Security Disability Benefits.
- Medicaid is the primary source of health care for people living with mental illness and a growing resource for people living with addiction.

## REAL NUMBERS, HARD MATH



## THE REAL COSTS OF LIVING IN CHARLOTTE, NC

A no-frills budget, excluding health care costs, for an individual Charlotte is \$27,072.

The cost of living in rural North Carolina is \$103 less per month.

HOUSING/ 1 BR Apartment	\$622	\$2,000
FOOD/ \$9 a day	\$271	
TAXES/ UTILITIES	\$457	\$1,000
TRANSPOR- TATION	\$475	
OTHER: clothing, toiletries, etc	\$431	

\$2,256



Many states, including North Carolina, have cost-sharing requirements for Medicaid recipients. Cost sharing can include copayments, cost-sharing, and monthly premiums.



For people with significant health care needs and who are living in poverty, cost-sharing can prevent access to effective and essential services.



After increasing cost-sharing in Oregon and Wisconsin, significant numbers of people left the healthcare program and resorted to the emergency room for care. In North Carolina, increases in co-payments raised Medicaid costs for the state.



**THE PRICE OF  
INCREASING  
COST-SHARING  
IN MEDICAID  
DOESN'T ADD UP**

**WHAT IS?**

## **SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS**

More than 1 in 5 uninsured adults with an opioid addiction have a serious mental illness.

Nationally, uninsured adults are less likely to have received treatment for addiction than those covered by Medicaid.

In North Carolina, over 400,000 people have a serious mental illness, including schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, or depression. These conditions often impact a person's ability to communicate with others, take care of themselves, and understand the world around them.

By 2015, over 2 million people were addicted to prescription opioids and 591,000 people addicted to heroin. In North Carolina alone, 1,567 people lost their lives to drug overdoses, a 14.5 percent increase over 2014.

**WHAT IS?**

## **SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) AND SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE (SSDI)**

People diagnosed with a serious mental illness often qualify for Medicaid through their eligibility for Social Security disability benefits. Individuals who qualify for SSDI receive on average \$13,578 per year, and those who qualify for SSI receive up to \$8,820 per year. SSDI and SSI are provided to individuals who cannot work due to a serious medical or mental illness, condition, or injury. In most states, eligibility for SSI confers eligibility for Medicaid. Generally, SSDI recipients are eligible for Medicare after two years, but may also qualify for Medicaid.