

Tennessee Monthly Update

July

Expanding Access to Substance Abuse Treatment Services in Eastern Tennessee

To help thousands of Tennesseans and their families fight substance abuse and addiction, the Helen Ross McNabb Center, The University of Tennessee Medical Center and the United Health Foundation announced a partnership to expand access to care providers and behavioral health services throughout East Tennessee.

A three-year, \$1.05 million grant from the United Health Foundation will support Helen Ross McNabb Center's mission by:

- Educating people seeking care at UT Medical Center's Emergency Room about available resources and services to help address their substance abuse/addiction, particularly individuals addicted to opioids.
- Engaging more than 250 patients per year, with the goal of 100 of these patients accepting a referral to outpatient, residential or other treatment options per year.
- Hiring addiction and peer support specialists to work within the emergency department to directly engage patients with needed resources and support.



Heather Gianfrocco, Chief Executive Officer for UnitedHealthcare Community & State with Governor Bill Lee



Michael and his care coordinator, Amy Thompson

Meet Michael!

A young man in his early 20s with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), Michael was found sleeping in the stairwell of his apartment building by a neighbor, who referred him to Adult Protection Services.

With no way to pay rent on his own, Michael was evicted and homeless from the apartment he was sharing with several family members after they were arrested and incarcerated.

Because Michael was a member of UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Tennessee, a Member Advocate quickly worked to get him enrolled in Employment and Community First CHOICES (ECF CHOICES), an integrated and person-centered program that promotes independent living and competitive employment for people of all ages who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability.

Within 45 minutes of being enrolled in ECF CHOICES, the UnitedHealthcare team and Michael's Care Coordinator, Amy Thompson, had connected Michael with CREVAA (Collaborative Response to Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse), a program that provides emergency services and coordinates long-term services that support vulnerable adult victims of crime, and Emory Valley, a nonprofit agency serving people with I/DD in Eastern Tennessee. Michael was provided five days of temporary housing as the team worked to coordinate the assistance he needed. Today Michael is a long way from sleeping in a stairwell. He is living on his own and working part-time. He is focused on his well-being and becoming more self-sufficient.

Stuck in the Middle of the Medicare and Medicaid Maze

By Allison Rizer, VP Strategy and Health Policy – Medicare/Medicaid Integration

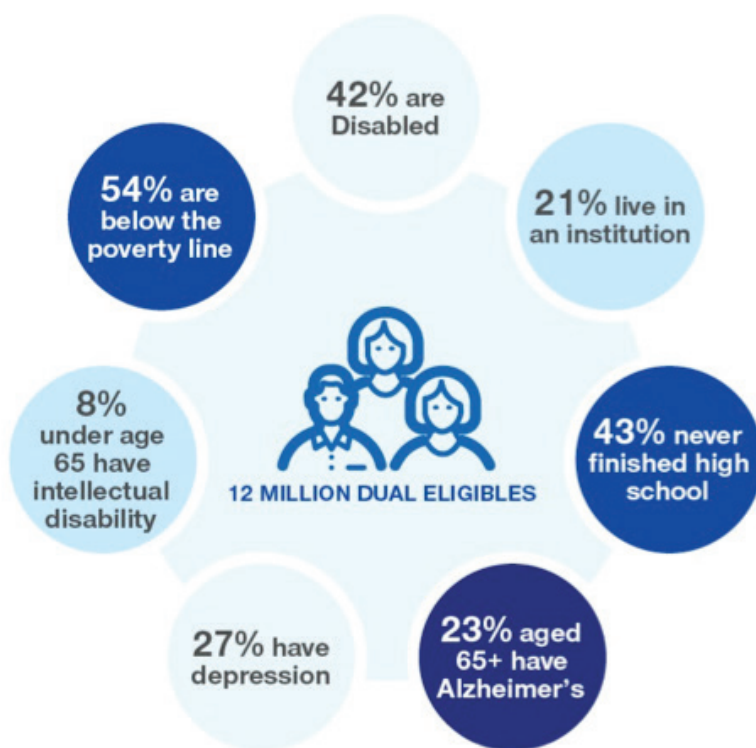
You arrive late for your doctor's appointment because traffic was awful and your transportation provider was behind schedule. You're anxious about being late and when the receptionist impatiently asks about your insurance coverage, you quickly fumble through your wallet to find your cards.

She glances at the first card you hand her and says they don't accept Medicaid. You're worried you will be turned away when the receptionist points to a red, white, and blue insurance card in your hand and asks for your \$20 copay. You don't have \$20 (and you're pretty sure you shouldn't have a copay but don't want to say anything). You're trying to remember the list of health concerns you wanted to share with the doctor. You're confused. You're frustrated. You're one of the 12 million dual eligibles in this country.

Individuals dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid are a medically and socially complex population, often with functional limitations and unmet behavioral health needs. And as the example above demonstrates, in many instances this population must navigate complex, misaligned, and fragmented health care and social service systems. This fragmentation can lead to stress for both the individual and their caregivers, poorer health outcomes, and individuals receiving incomplete care in inappropriate settings.

The health policy environment surrounding dual eligibles is rapidly evolving as policy makers better understand the population and the fragmented maze of health care they are trying to navigate.

To learn more about the strides being made to address this system fragmentation, read the full [blog post](#) on [UHCCS.com](#).



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