



Position Statement on Katie Beckett Premiums

The Home Care for Certain Disabled Children program – or Katie Beckett as it is more commonly called – provides access to Medicaid payment for services for children who have developmental disabilities who qualify for institutional level of care but whose families have chosen to provide that care in the family home. Parental income is disregarded in order to have the child qualify based solely on their developmental needs. The program recognizes that, without this program, families would face an institutional placement for their child at a high emotional cost to the family and a much higher financial burden to the state. The result of this program in Idaho is that families stay together and the state saves money over higher cost institutional services.

The Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities is guided by the principles of independence, inclusion, equality, respect and responsibility. We believe all Idahoans should have the opportunity to live the lives they choose in a community – and a state - that supports those choices.

Based on these principles, the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities opposes any efforts to impose premiums on families whose children receive services through the Katie Beckett program. The Council believes that requiring families to pay a fee to care for their child at home is counterproductive to both the intent of the Katie Beckett program to support families with children with significant disabilities and to the legislature's intent to save taxpayer dollars.

Many families using the program maintain private health insurance to help cover the costs for services for their child. However, private insurance typically does not cover many of the kinds of services provided through Katie Beckett. That is why the program is so critical. Instituting a premium in the Katie Beckett program may force families to choose between having health insurance for their family or giving up the therapeutic services needed by their child with a disability.

Reducing access to services for children with disabilities impedes their development, lessens their opportunities for independence in adulthood, creates hardships for families caring for the children, and increases the costs to the state by having people with disabilities rely on more expensive service alternatives.

Families caring for their children with disabilities at home do not need a premium to remind them of their responsibility. They are already assuming responsibility for their child – through out-of-pocket expenses, higher insurance premiums, lost work and a variety of other ways. They have made the decision to keep their child at home and their family together. The state should not take action that penalizes them for that choice.