Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When the Dominoes Fall

Laura C. - Golden, Colorado

"You can't take your health for granted. One thing happens, and then it snowballs. ***If it weren't for Colorado's Medicaid program, our health—our family—would have fallen apart****."*

That's Medicaid *shares stories of people covered by Medicaid at critical points in their lives, underscoring the importance of stable health insurance coverage in building a Culture of Health.*

Laura C. never thought she would need Medicaid benefits for herself or her family. She and her husband Jed ran an outdoor adventure business together and explored the Rocky Mountains in their spare time. They were surprised when Laura became pregnant because they didn't think it was medically possible.

After learning the pregnancy was high-risk, Laura, who was uninsured, signed up for Colorado's Medicaid program, which provides extra assistance for at-risk pregnancies. When she visited her small town's Medicaid office, the lone employee, who knew Laura was pregnant, said "We've been expecting you."

Immediately after giving birth, things took a turn for the worse. Laura and Jed's newborn son couldn't process foods and had to undergo emergency abdominal surgery when he was one month old. At the same time, Jed's chronic and degenerative autoimmune arthritis was getting worse.

He toughed it out as best he could in order to keep working and support his family, until a freak car crash left him permanently disabled. Jed's medication alone cost nearly $90,000. Without Medicaid, Laura says, their son would never have made it out of the hospital.

Today, Laura's family feels optimistic. Their son is now six and is in school and loves playing in the park. Jed is slowly recovering from the accident and can now go on short walks. Laura cares for them both, while serving as a member of several Medicaid and patient advisory and advocacy boards.