Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When Education Is Within Reach

LaVerne J., PhD - Las Vegas, Nevada

*"**Medicaid opened the door** for my education and propelled me into lifelong service for our country."*

***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.*

After **LaVerne J.** graduated from high school, she quickly rose through the ranks at the Indiana Public Housing Authority, going from a file clerk to the property manager in just a few years. She was six months pregnant when she could no longer handle the 24-hour on-call responsibilities of the job, and her mother convinced her to go to college.

LaVerne and her son were covered by Medicaid while she finished her bachelor's degree in nursing. On graduation day in 1986, she called the Medicaid office to be removed from the program. She had a job lined up that provided health insurance, and she was ready to give back to the community.

From there LaVerne's career took off, becoming a clinical director for a Federally Qualified Health Center before enlisting in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, where she was quickly promoted to captain. After being honorably discharged from the military, LaVerne obtained both a master's degree and a doctorate, and founded a ministry with her husband where she promotes community health.

"Without Medicaid, I would have had to continue working to keep my medical coverage instead of getting my education. Medicaid allowed me to go through doors that I couldn't have otherwise, and be of greater service to this country."