Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When You Need Support to Support Others

John M. - New York, New York

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.*

John was first introduced to Medicaid under difficult circumstances—he enrolled in coverage at age 14 while staying in a shelter after leaving an abusive household. While at the shelter he signed up for a work-training program and eventually moved into his own apartment.

For a period John was not on Medicaid while employed as a counselor in a school and for a youth housing organization, where he connected others to the same sort of resources that supported him. However, John's career was sidetracked when he tested positive for HIV, which led him to reenroll in Medicaid.

"One of my medications is $4,000 a month," John says. "There is no way I could afford that without Medicaid."

The program has not only covered this critical HIV treatment for John, but has also provided the care he needs to manage his diabetes, lupus, and heart problems.

Today he is continuing to help others in need as a counselor at a local nonprofit AIDS organization, where he educates others about how basic services can go a long way.

"A lot of people don't think Medicaid covers the things it does," John says. "If it wasn't for Medicaid, with all the health issues I've been through, I know I wouldn't have been able to make it."