Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When You're Able to Move Forward

Gene R. - Austin, Texas

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.*

Gene became quadriplegic at age 17 after his neck broke in an accident. He soon enrolled in Medicaid, which covers services he could not otherwise afford.

"Medicaid is a real help financially, but it doesn't mean you can sit on your butt and just take it easy all day," Gene says. "You still have responsibilities to contribute to the community."

Gene has held many different jobs over the years that provided health insurance, but Medicaid has supplemented that coverage with services that he needs. One of the most important is covering an attendant, who helps him get through a variety of daily care activities.

"Without that, I probably would be in a nursing home," Gene says. "I just don't have the money to be paying out of pocket."

Today Gene produces and stars in his own local television show that focuses on the lives and lifestyles of people with disabilities, which he has been running for the past 11 years. Without support from Medicaid, he says this sort of independent life wouldn't be possible.

"I can't really imagine my life without Medicaid," Gene says. "It's been really important for me, and I'm very thankful to have it."