Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When You Recover from a Rocky Start

Matthew W. - Anchorage, Alaska

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.*

Matthew is of Alaska Native of Yupik descent and a member of the Kasigluk Tribe. Born with fetal alcohol syndrome, he was in foster care early in his life and has been on Medicaid for much of his 26 years.

After being adopted by Mary, a dentist in the United States Public Health Service, Medicaid provided Matthew with the medical care and behavioral health services he required as a child for his anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from abusive situations in the foster care system.

"I didn't have any other way to get the services he needed," Mary says. "It allowed us to become a family and I think that is pretty special."

The program in Alaska provides Matthew with medication and transportation services for shopping and other needs, as well as support for his assisted-living housing, which gives him a sense of independence.

"I rely on Medicaid a lot," he says. "Without it I would have no backup plan. I am very thankful for all the services it can provide."