Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When Support Means Life

Kerstin M. - Hayneville, Alabama

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.*

Kerstin was born with cerebral palsy, a disorder that affects her ability to move and maintain posture, and as she became older, other illnesses developed that hindered her growth and development. Now 19 years old, Kerstin has been diagnosed with epilepsy, restrictive lung disease, and a number of other illnesses.

Mattissa, Kerstin's mother, had a full-time job when her daughter was born and believed the family would not qualify for Medicaid as a result. Nevertheless, Mattissa applied for the program and was approved, providing a valuable source for care.

Years later Mattissa transitioned to a part-time job in order to care for her daughter and Medicaid became Kerstin's primary source for health care. The program covers Kerstin's food—which is given through a feeding tube—oxygen tanks, personalized home care, and medical supplies.

"Without Medicaid it would be really hard to keep my daughter alive because of her extensive medical history and needs," Mattisa says. "I don't know how we would've been able to take care of Kerstin if we didn't have Medicaid."