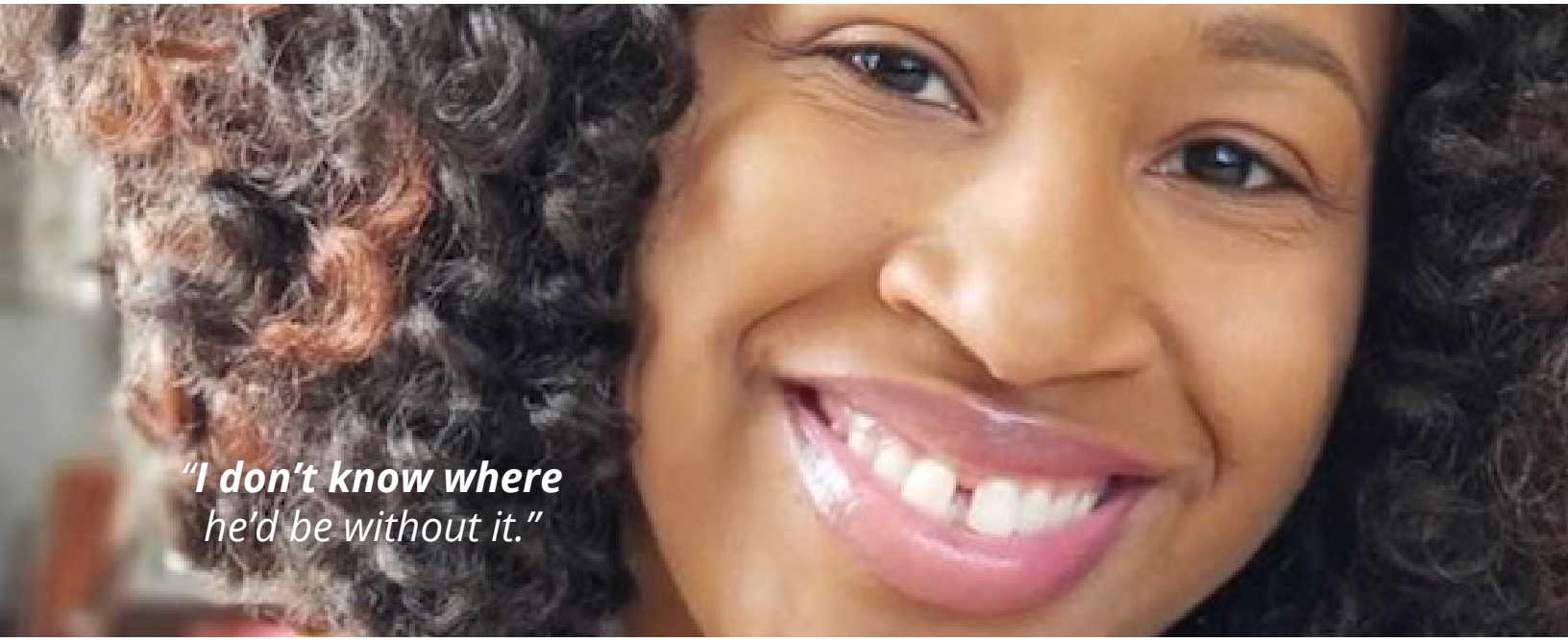
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When You Meet Families Where They Are

Adrian J. - Hattiesburg, Mississippi



***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.*

Adrian's brother is autistic and when they were growing up he suffered from seizures, requiring expensive treatments and medication that were covered by Medicaid.

"I don't know where he'd be without it," she says. "To be able to link people I know to resources and get health care access has been a joy of mine."

Currently she is an assistant director at the Hattiesburg, Miss., office of Youth Villages, a nationwide nonprofit organization that has existed for more than three decades helping emotionally and behaviorally troubled children and families.

As part of her role, she oversees the Medicaid-funded Mississippi Youth Programs Around the Clock (MYPAC) effort, which has been in existence since about 2012 and currently has more than 500 people enrolled throughout the state.

MYPAC follows a "wraparound" process, which is a coordination of services provided to youth and families after needs have been identified. The support team is comprised of formal and informal members such neighbors, friends, mentors, and MYPAC staff, as well as schools, churches and even possibly a child protective services agency.

The collaboration seeks to build social skills, help members make connections with the larger community, and address traumas, which can range from physical to what is experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a natural disaster, a car accident, moving to a new location, or the loss of a family member.

Even if a local family does not receive Medicaid, MYPAC still provides services for a limited time and puts them in touch with community resources.

"The fact is we meet families where they are. Not all programs are able to do that," she says. "We work with the family in their own environment. As a result, they feel very comfortable. It's a nonjudgmental environment."

She is proud to say that even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, MYPAC was still able to provide services and ensure families had their needs met.

"I love what I do—and seeing the progress. It's little things, like a youth completing the program or doing extremely well," Adrian says.