Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When You Can Be Part of the Community

Naomi W. - Evans, Georgia

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.*

Naomi enrolled in Medicaid after she lost her job when pregnant with her son Noah, who was born prematurely at just 26 weeks and lives with chronic and medically complex conditions that require round-the-clock care.

Noah's Medicaid coverage is provided through a combination of innovative programs, including Georgia's Right from the Start initiative for comprehensive health services and the Katie Beckett waiver program for children with complex medical needs.

"If we didn't have Medicaid, we would be in dire straits," Naomi says. "These services keep him out of an institution and allow him to be a member of society and our community."

Medicaid covers in-home attendants for Noah who help with daily activities, as well as a wheelchair, assistive communication devices, incontinence supplies, medications, and other critical supports.

Naomi says an accessible vehicle that is partially covered by Medicaid has been particularly helpful for Noah to live a full life, with attendants able to take the now-11-year-old on outings.

"Without the wheelchair-accessible van, he would really only be able to go to and from school," Naomi says. "For him to have the resources he needs to be fully integrated into the community is priceless."

Access to the vehicle has allowed Noah to go to summer camps, giving him the opportunity to spend time with neurotypical peers he may not have been able to interact with otherwise.

The extensive care Noah receives affords Naomi the opportunity to work at a local hospital helping other families navigate the health care system and obtain crucial resources.

She says the freedom Medicaid creates goes beyond helping her own family.

"Just as much as we need the community, the community needs us," Naomi says. "For people to see Noah and value us, beyond what he receives, is a collective benefit. The Medicaid programs we have been a part of have been able to foster that."