



One woman's struggle for care in America's South, without Medicaid

Featuring Eliska Hahn

This time on Code WACK!

Now that the COVID health emergency has ended and millions of Americans are losing Medicaid coverage, we're thinking about ***the nearly two million Americans who never got it in the first place*** because their state did not adopt the Medicaid expansion back in 2014. ***How did this affect them?***

To find out, we're revisiting one of our favorite episodes about radio personality and performance artist, [Eliska Hahn](#), who was struggling with multiple sclerosis while living in a state that did not accept the ACA's Medicaid expansion. ***How did she avoid financial ruin? This oldie but goodie episode is an excellent reminder of why we need Medicare for All in America.***

SHOW NOTES

WE DISCUSS

So tell me about when you were diagnosed with MS.

"...In 2008. I was working as a skating director of the rink. It's in Morgantown, West Virginia. I remember I skated a performance, a solo performance, in our Christmas show in 2008. As I prepared and definitely as I skated in the show. I'm like, *there is something wrong with my body.*

"Starting in about February of 2009. I started to have some symptomatology that was extremely concerning....

"I kept having (an) inability to walk or feel. I had blurred vision. I had pain. Try showing up at an ER repeatedly with pain and see how you're treated, even if your community knows you as a professional athlete who teaches their kids.

"So, I mean, I even had an ER doctor say to me "I think that this is emotional. I think that you need to consider being seen by a psychologist, and a psychiatrist.

"...within a week after my birthday - that I thought would be my last - I ended up at an integrative med doctor in Pittsburgh. She was a specialist in autoimmune disorders and systemic infections. That first visit, they took 30 vials of blood and shipped it all over the United States to try to figure out what in the world is going on and that was when I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis." - **Eliska Hahn**

Did you ever have a problem getting health insurance because you had MS?

"...I didn't have a problem getting private insurance because I was so sick for so long - it depleted my financials so much - that I didn't really try to get private insurance.

"But what happened is I moved to Wilmington, North Carolina ... to be with my fiance and I was not aware at the time that North Carolina is one of the 14 states in the United States that did not adopt Medicaid expansion. So I moved there and after I moved there I then realized, uh oh. I was starting to get better...but I definitely needed coverage until I could get back on my feet.

"And I was not able to get it. I was not able to get it. I ended up going over \$50,000 in debt. I collapsed in my home the day after Christmas, it would have been Christmas of 2019." – **Eliska Hahn**

And then what happened?

"...thankfully, a woman that I believe was a social worker at the hospital, ... said "you need to file for coverage in the state of North Carolina." But the only way that you're going to be able to do that is if the state of North Carolina finds you disabled ..."

So the fact that I don't have a job, and the financial situation. She said 'it doesn't matter here. You have to be found disabled by the state. And they have to summon all your medical records and go through this process. There's going to be a hearing. You'll be supplied with a lawyer."

"It took six and a half months for it to finally come to hearing. But it did and the good state of North Carolina decided that I was disabled...

I don't know how it works in all of the states that did not adopt Medicaid expansion,... [but] I found that if you are a parent of a minor child, you can get Medicaid if you have financial need without being declared disabled.

"Once your children are not minors anymore -- they're 18 and up -- it doesn't matter what your financial need is." –**Eliska Hahn**

Helpful Links

[Status of State Medicaid Expansion Decisions: Interactive Map](#), *KFF*

[How Many Uninsured Are in the Coverage Gap and How Many Could be Eligible if All States Adopted the Medicaid Expansion?](#), *KFF*

[Jayapal, Dingell, Sanders Introduce Medicare for All Act of 2023](#), *Office of Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal*

[Counterproductive Consequences of a Conservative Ideology: Medicaid Expansion and Personal Responsibility Requirements](#), *National Library of Medicine*

[Medicaid Expansion: Frequently Asked Questions](#), *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*

[Am I Eligible?](#), *Healthy Blue (a Medicaid provider in North Carolina)*

[New Incentive for States to Adopt the ACA Medicaid Expansion: Implications for State Spending](#), *KFF*

Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

Biography: Eliska Hahn

Eliska has been a photographer's model since she was just 18 months old and she continues to work in this field today. She has worked for a number of notable agencies throughout the USA. She has worked on award winning regional, national, and international campaigns.

Eliska also has vast experience as a runway model, trade show model, and spokesmodel for a wide array of products, companies, and services.

With over 30 years experience as a professional actor, voiceover artist, and radio broadcaster, Eliska has worked in every area of acting from feature films, shorts, music videos, documentaries, theater, improv, and commercials.

Get Involved / Take Action

[Subscribe to Code WACK!](#) *to catch all our weekly podcast episodes.*

[Subscribe to HEAL California](#) *for health policy news with a California focus*

[Join Healthy California Now](#) *- a coalition working toward a California single-payer system. Individual and organizational memberships available.*

[Join the CalCare Campaign](#) *to win single-payer in California, sponsored by National Nurses United/California Nurses Association.*