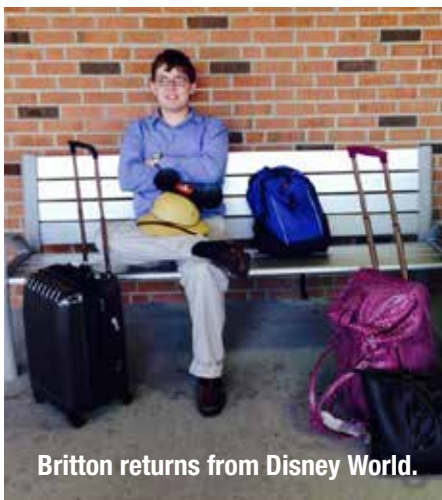


Medicaid Buy-In Success Story: Britton Scercy

Under Medicaid, states may offer a “buy-in” option for workers with disabilities to make Medicaid available individuals who would otherwise be ineligible for Medicaid due to income. This option allows people to transition to work without having to face the immediate loss of health insurance coverage. In 2005, the North Carolina General Assembly opted to make the Medicaid buy-in available through a law known as Health Coverage for Workers with Disabilities (N.C. General Statute §108A-54.1), which covers working individuals with a disability between the ages of 16 and 65. Certain fees and premiums may be charged on a sliding scale based on income, but there is no income limit.

One such individual who has benefited from the Medicaid buy-in is Britton Scercy. Britton is a bright young man with a great memory and a great sense of humor who enjoys sharing his phenomenal knowledge of Disney facts. He also has autism and spent most of his elementary and middle school years in general education with support from teachers who understood autism.

As he transitioned to high school, it was clear that the high school environment with both academic and social demands would challenge him. His mother and biggest advocate, Jill Scercy, worked with school and community staff to proactively plan for his future after high school. Britton receives community supports through the Innovations Waiver (formally known as the Community Alternatives Program, or CAP) to help him develop skills to improve his independence. During his high school studies, one of the best experiences for him was his work experience that formed part of his Occupational Course of Study graduation requirements. Through this program, a job coach found non-paid job experiences for Britton to try; here he found a purpose. It became clear that, rather than attending college, Britton could thrive in the workforce. As part of



Britton returns from Disney World.

the post-secondary planning they did, Jill met with an individual from the Social Security Administration about the benefits that Britton was receiving and how he would be able to continue to receive them while working with the provisions put into place for

individuals with disabilities who want to work.

Britton soon received his high school diploma with his peers, but an even prouder moment came shortly afterwards

when he got a part-time job offer (four hours per day) to become an office assistant at the Autism Society of North Carolina’s Greenville Regional Office. When asked, he would proudly say, “I organize stuff and I clean the office.” He became a true “co-worker,” looked forward to sharing facts with his co-workers, and felt good about the work that he was doing and the new skills he learned daily.

In November, just four months after Britton started his job, his mother, Jill, attended his annual Medicaid eligibility meeting since he was receiving Medicaid through the CAP waiver. She arrived at the meeting prepared with Britton’s pay stubs and proudly displayed them to the Department of Social Services worker, who entered the numbers into her database and informed her: “I’m sorry, he makes too much money with his disability and earned income. If he continues to work, he will lose his benefits.”

Jill was disappointed because she had met with a Social Security representative and received assurance that Britton would be able to work and still keep his community support services since he was an individual with a disability. Jill begged her not to discontinue his services while she searched for answers.

Jill called Britton’s employer, explained the situation, and asked if perhaps he could continue to come to work each day without pay until she could resolve the issue so as not to jeopardize his eligibility for community support services, and they agreed. For the next two weeks, Jill contacted elected officials and reached out to advocacy organizations to find answers. She learned that in the Medicaid manual, the wording was there to help individuals with disabilities retain their access to Medicaid while trying to establish stability in a job. But the words “Unless the individual receives Medicaid through

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Britton Scercy at work.



March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month!

In March, we will be honoring National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month along with all the Councils across the country. The entire month is an opportunity to promote respect for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and to educate others about the abilities people with I/DD possess. The campaign is also designed to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life, as well as awareness of the barriers that people with disabilities still face at times in connecting to the communities in which they live.

The NCCDD community is filling the calendar with events throughout the month such as:

- Upward to Financial Stability Train-the-Trainer seminars being held in Charlotte, Boone, Fayetteville and Raleigh.
- US Disabled Golf Association's golf clinics every Saturday in March in Raleigh.
- Triangle Down Syndrome Network's Advocacy Day at the General Assembly Building in Raleigh.
- NC Sibs Conference in Carrboro.
- Vaya Health's Supported Living: A Shared Vision Conference in Greensboro.

Get more details and how you can participate at: <http://nccdd.org/dd-awareness-month-across-north-carolina.html>

Medicaid Buy-In Success Story

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CAP" made Britton unable to access all of those supports put into place to help individuals with disabilities go to work without losing their benefits.

Jill made a phone call to NCCDD network partner Disability Rights North Carolina and connected to someone who listened to Britton's story and sympathized with Jill. Over the next 367 days, Jill stayed in close contact with attorney Lisa Grafstein, who provided unending support and encouragement. Lisa kept Jill informed and invited her to the court when she went before the judge on behalf of Britton and many other individuals with similar needs.

Once the judge ruled in Britton's favor, Britton's employer began paying him his earnings of \$7.25 an hour for 16 hours a week. He

has grown socially, saying that his co-workers "have become my good friends," and he has gained numerous skills from participating in a work environment in his community.

Meanwhile, his supervisor says, "He continues to learn new skills and increase his flexibility. He always gives me a different perspective and reminds me why I work in this field. . . . He definitely challenges me to think in new ways!" His co-workers state that he contributes to the agency's success and their understanding of autism. He continues to develop skills that will allow him to live more independently, and he is saving money for his next trip to his beloved Walt Disney World.

For more information about North Carolina's Medicaid buy-in, visit <http://bit.ly/2lhlx4D>