

A statewide nonprofit is documenting the stories of Arkansans who receive health insurance through the state's Medicaid program. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, in collaboration with social work programs at UA Little Rock and UA Fayetteville, has been collecting stories of Medicaid recipients in the state; in particular, those from minority and underserved communities. UA Little Rock social work graduate student Deidre Gray says those on Medicaid reported having overall greater access to healthcare than uninsured Arkansans.

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"...the past year."

However, Gray says adults with private health insurance reported having fewer barriers to accessing care than those on Medicaid. CaSandra Glover, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families Health Policy Fellow, says the goal of the program is to look for gaps in service so they can be addressed with policy changes.

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"...can be heard."

Some barriers reported by Medicaid recipients include a limited number of doctors' appointments available in one year, as well as having a hard time finding providers within their insurance network. More information is available at aradvocates.org

A new project led by a statewide nonprofit seeks to collect stories from Arkansans who receive health insurance from the state's Medicaid program. The new initiative, called Medicaid: The Lived Experience, is led by Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families in partnership with social work programs at UA Little Rock and UA Fayetteville. Tosha Jeffries is a UA Little Rock grad student who worked on the project. She says a common complaint from Medicaid recipients is that they're limited to only 12 doctor's office visits each year.

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"...their 12 slots."

Jeffries said Medicaid recipients also reported difficulty finding doctors within their insurance network, as well as some physicians who provided lower-quality care to patients on the program. Despite that, on average, Medicaid patients reported having fewer barriers to accessing healthcare than those without health insurance in the state. Nationally, about 76 million people are covered by Medicaid, while about 917-thousand people receive health insurance through the program.