



De'Von has big dreams. He loves his Baltimore neighborhood and wants to run for political office to improve his community. He also wants to direct movies. De'Von has a big personality to match his big aspirations, which makes you believe he will achieve whatever he sets his mind to. Maybe it's De'Von's childhood experiences that inspire him to help his neighbors and city.

De'Von entered the foster care system when he was three. He was lucky to be placed with his grandmother and remain with his three siblings. As a current student at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), De'Von was relieved to learn that new state health care legislation meant that he and other foster children could remain on Medicaid until they turn 21, instead of 18. Having health care is one less thing for this motivated college student to worry about. "I'm blessed to have [health care]. It's a good feeling. It is something that should be given to all people," says De'Von.

Luckily, De'Von has never experienced a health emergency; however, he has been able to use the program's benefits. De'Von's political and directorial aspirations would require him to be in the public spotlight. He's been preparing for years for this attention by visiting his dentist regularly to make sure he has a contagious smile that will win him votes. De'Von's impressive oral hygiene care was possible through the Medicaid program and will continue to be available until he is 21.

De'Von values the Medicaid program and appreciates having access to health care. He's been going to the same clinic since he was a child, and has developed such a rapport with his physicians that they know him, as well as his siblings, by name. His caseworker also makes navigating Medicaid easy for the family. Although he is unaware of how it happens, his caseworker and grandmother are able to renew his Medicaid every six months, so there's never been a gap in coverage.

De'Von says that he would recommend Medicaid to others, but he's noticed areas where he believes the Medicaid system could improve. "Medicaid needs to be more visible to the public," says De'Von. He emphasized the importance of promotion for Medicaid in the inner-city where there is a real need, but a lack of knowledge about available resources. He is also aware of his own impending need for health insurance once he turns 21 and is no longer eligible for Medicaid.

Despite his concerns, De'Von is incredibly grateful for Medicaid, "I like the Medicaid program because health care is something that should be given to all people because we all share this world together and it's selfish that some people can receive health care. Everyone wants to have good health, no one wants to have bad health, or be hurt, or injured." Spoken like someone who wants to make a change.