

Medicaid cuts affecting local families

By Daniel Winn

State money troubles are on a collision course with some of the state's most vulnerable residents.

Friday, a disability rights group called on Kansas legislators to restore a 10 percent cut to medicaid.

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The "Big Tent Coalition" is calling on Kansas legislators to restore medicaid cuts.

For Shannon Graham and her 4 disabled children, getting out the door in the morning is no easy task.

She says nothing happens fast around their house, "We wait for Max's nurse to get here and then she'll get him ready, we'll get him off to school and then we all will head of to the doctor's office with Carley."

They're already feeling the legislature's 10 percent cut to medicaid effect them directly, "Personally its my kids wheel chairs right now, Max who is three has outgrown his wheelchair and we took it in to the D-M-E who has always provided his chairs, and a week later we got a call saying were no longer taking Kansas Medicaid."

Friday morning, a disabilities group named the "Big Tent Coalition" called on the state to restore those very cuts that are affecting the Grahams and hundreds more.

Rocky Nichols is the Executive Director for the Disability Rights Center of Kansas, "Our message is simple, you can pay this now or pay a heck of a lot later. If you don't fund community based services, people will end up in institutions which are entitlements under medicaid. Its going to cost taxpayers 6 times the amount that it would to provide those services in

the community."

Nichols went on to say, policy makers are essentially handing down a tax increase to those who can't help themselves. Unfortunately, he expects things will likely get worse for the disabled before they get better.