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U.S. Appeals Court Upholds Ruling Blocking States' Medicaid Work Requirements

A federal appeals court has upheld a lower court decision blocking states' requirements that people must work in order to receive Medicaid.

Residents of Kentucky and Arkansas brought the action against Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar, contending that Azar "acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner when he approved Medicaid demonstration requests for Kentucky and Arkansas."

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit agreed, writing in an opinion posted Friday that the secretary's authorization was indeed unlawful.

The ruling will apply only to Arkansas because Kentucky's new Democratic governor, Andy Beshear, rescinded his state's planned requirements in December.

In affirming the lower court's judgment, the three-judge panel concluded that Azar "failed to analyze whether the demonstrations would promote the primary objective of Medicaid — to furnish medical assistance."

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