

Update on Closing the Coverage Gap in North Carolina by Expanding Medicaid

Date: 5/31/2021

Please contact your state representatives - Representatives and Senators from your COUNTY (regardless of whether they are in your NC house or senate district). Urge them to expand Medicaid in the appropriations bill to close the coverage gap and give them information about the economic benefit to their specific county that such expansion would have.

Why another action alert about the Medicaid coverage gap?

The House and Senate bills that sought to close the coverage gap did not pass; however, ***because closing the Medicaid coverage gap is a budgetary issue, it can still be included in the new budget.***

Care4Carolina, which is a coalition of faith groups, civic organizations, and health care organizations, has compiled data on a countywide basis estimating the economic benefit to each NC county should North Carolina choose to close the Medicaid coverage gap. To find this information click [HERE](#) and select your county.

To find your COUNTY's representatives, click [HERE](#) and select your county.

Why now?

Five major changes make Medicaid expansion a better possibility this session:

1. The American Rescue Plan provides an additional \$1.7 billion in federal funds to support Medicaid expansion - cutting in half the cost to North Carolinians (from 10% to 5% of the total cost) with no need to cost share for up to six years. This extra money could move people off Medicaid into private insurance plans which has been a concern of those unwilling to expand Medicaid.
2. North Carolina transforms to Medicaid Managed Care on July 1, which has been a condition for many legislators before they would consider expanding Medicaid.
3. The global pandemic persists. Many have lost jobs or will lose them along with employer sponsored health insurance.
4. Other states that have resisted Medicaid expansion in the past have begun movement towards it: Alabama, Wyoming, and Wisconsin.
5. NC legislators previously opposed to expansion have indicated some willingness to expand benefits to those in the coverage gap, many of whom live in rural areas.

Who is in the coverage gap?

- Currently more than 600,000 working North Carolinians are unable to pay for private insurance but are not eligible for Medicaid.
- Many in the coverage gap are citizens who form the backbone of our economy, our essential workers - grocery store clerks, restaurant workers, gig workers, etc.

What would expanded Medicaid provide to North Carolinians?

- Critically needed **access to health care**, medication and treatment, as well as help for substance abuse and chronic conditions like diabetes.
- Tens of thousands of full- and part-time **jobs** would be created in all sectors, including health-related jobs, construction, retail, professional jobs, state or local government, etc.
- Support for **rural hospitals and health-care related services** that are critical sources of employment for those in rural areas.
- **Protection from medical debt and bankruptcy** for families living on low wages.
- **Funding to reduce maternal mortality** in the state by allowing coverage for new mothers through 12 months postpartum.
- A fighting chance against **cancer** for many people, as health insurance status is the single greatest indicator of whether you will survive a cancer diagnosis.
- Businesses would save on average \$1,685 in lost productivity per employee per year, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate.

We believe, based on our testimonies of Equality and Community, that quality healthcare should be available to all.

For more facts and information on Medicaid Expansion, go [here](#)