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Contact: Logan Dennis  
Cell: (208) 830-7653  
Email: [ldennis@jannus.org](mailto:ldennis@jannus.org)

**Close the Gap Calls for Unmodified Implementation of Medicaid Expansion**  
*Changes to the law could cost Idaho millions*

Boise, ID - On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Idahoans issued a mandate on healthcare in our state, supporting Proposition 2 to expand Medicaid with more than 60% of the vote. Following this resounding victory, Close the Gap is calling on our state lawmakers to implement Medicaid expansion as it was written, voted-upon, and passed by hundreds of thousands of Idahoans from across the state. The group warns that changes to the law could cost Idaho millions of dollars to administer and delays setting up bureaucracy that don't help working families get health coverage.

"Medicaid expansion as passed by voters makes good economic sense for Idaho, saving state taxpayers \$18 million annually and allowing Idaho to bring our tax dollars home from Washington, D.C." explained Lauren Necochea, director of Idaho Voices for Children. "Creating barriers to coverage will increase administrative costs while decreasing access to care for the Idahoans who need it the most. Implementing unmodified Medicaid expansion is the only way to realize the full benefits of the program," Necochea said.

Instituting barriers to health coverage has proven very costly in other states. Here are just a few examples:

- Ohio is expecting to spend \$380 million over five years in new county costs to add sideboards to Medicaid expansion.
- When work requirements were considered in Pennsylvania, it was estimated the state would spend \$600 million and hire 300 new staff to administer the requirements.
- Kentucky will spend \$374 million over a two-year period on administrative costs for instituting barriers to coverage.

- Both Arkansas and Kentucky are currently caught in expensive, taxpayer-funded lawsuits over their attempts to institute work requirements.

“These costs are astronomical when compared to the much smaller investment the state would make through unmodified implementation of Proposition 2,” said Erin Bennett, Government Relations Director for the American Heart Association, Idaho Chapter. “Furthermore, creating new layers of bureaucratic red tape and increasing administrative costs won’t help taxpayers or Idahoans who need health coverage.”

Studies in Michigan and Ohio showed that once workers got access to Medicaid, they took 10% fewer sick days. Taking coverage away from newly-eligible Idahoans in the gap would hurt Idaho workers and businesses alike.

Close the Gap Idaho is working to ensure Proposition 2 is implemented as passed by the voters. Idahoans are encouraged to contact their local legislators to urge them to fund the state share of Proposition 2 without adding unnecessary barriers to coverage.

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### **About Close the Gap Idaho**

Close the Gap Idaho is a network of over 300 organizations and individuals statewide, working to support a complete solution to the coverage gap and to preserve health coverage for Idahoans. Close the Gap Idaho has led the effort to expand Medicaid in Idaho since 2014. A list of Close the Gap Idaho steering committee members can be found on the [Close the Gap Idaho website](#). Quotes from additional member organizations and Idahoans in the gap are shared below.