



Medicaid Expansion Implementation Background

After a labor-intensive signature-gathering phase and a hard-fought campaign, on November 6th, Idahoans supported Proposition 2, the Medicaid expansion ballot initiative, with more than 60% of the vote. Medicaid expansion is now the law of the land in Idaho. Proposition 2 was supported by Idahoans in all corners of the state, reflecting the bipartisan, grassroots nature of this initiative.

Medicaid expansion will provide tens of thousands of Idahoans living in the health coverage gap with access to quality, affordable healthcare. These are Idahoans who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to be eligible for financial assistance to help them afford coverage through Idaho's health insurance exchange. This initiative will help those making up to \$17,000 a year individually or up to \$29,000 a year to support a family of three. Medicaid expansion brings healthcare coverage to those who need it the most.

Medicaid expansion will help many hardworking Idahoans, including families, single moms, and those nearing retirement. Many will be able to visit a doctor for the first time in years. Medicaid expansion will also help those who have lost their jobs due to chronic health conditions, allowing some to return to work. By taking a proactive approach to their health rather than seeking costly treatment in the emergency room during a crisis, Medicaid expansion will result in better health outcomes and quality of life for Idahoans while saving taxpayer money.

During the 2019 Legislative Session, the only action needed by the Legislature is to fund the state's 10% share of the program. The Idaho Legislature should implement the law as it was written, voted-upon, and passed by hundreds of thousands of Idahoans from across the state. Concurrently, the Idaho Health & Welfare Department will submit a State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services by early February, which should then be approved within 90-days. Ensuring the speedy implementation of voter approved Medicaid expansion can make the difference between life and death for our fellow Idahoans.

Medicaid expansion as written and voted upon makes good economic sense for Idaho, as it will save state taxpayers money and allow Idaho to bring nearly \$400 million of our tax dollars home from Washington, D.C. However, adding barriers to coverage will drive up administrative costs while denying access to care for our fellow Idahoans. Implementing unmodified Medicaid expansion is the only way to realize the full benefits of the program.