

Maine Needs More Affordable Health Care, Not Less

It's official! The 2017 ballot will ask Mainers if they want to expand Medicaid. Volunteers from across the state collected more than enough signatures to make this happen. **Mainers have spoken – they want more access to affordable health care, not less.**

People are taking this question to the ballot because the Legislature has been unable to get it done. **Federal funds were earmarked for Maine three years ago that would provide health insurance to 70,000 Mainers by expanding Medicaid coverage.** The Legislature passed legislation five times to put these federal funds to work for Maine. The Governor and a minority of lawmakers have blocked this common sense solution.

The cost of health care, and especially prescription drugs, is taking a heavier and heavier toll on our families and neighbors. We have the opportunity to do something about that right now.

The majority of states are already reaping the benefits. 31 states have expanded coverage through Medicaid. They are reporting significant benefits, savings and improved economies as a result. These states (including those with Republican Governors) are urging Congress to maintain this important coverage.

This goes beyond the moral imperative of providing access to affordable coverage to 70,000 Maine people who can't afford it. Expanding health coverage through Medicaid will benefit Maine and our people in many ways. It will:

- Create over 3000 good paying jobs throughout Maine, including in rural parts of the State where jobs are desperately needed;
- Address Maine's drug crisis by greatly improving access to treatment services for uninsured people struggling with addiction;
- Increase access to health care for women *and their children*; when parents are covered and able to access health care their children are also more likely to receive the health care services they need in order to thrive;
- Bring over \$500 million in new federal funds to our state each year;
- Bolster the health of Maine's workforce;
- Prevent family illness or health problems from turning into bankruptcy, loss of a home, and destitution;
- Save the state over \$27 million in savings to the state of Maine through decreased state funded health care spending and savings to our criminal justice system; and
- Provide more resources for community health centers and hospitals throughout the state.

If the Legislature is once again unable to get this done for Maine, then we will all have a chance to vote on this in November! Some have claimed this issue is moot because Congress will change the Affordable Care Act.

One thing is not going to change –Maine people need more affordable health care, not less.

When so much hangs in the balance in Washington, it is more important than ever that Maine sends a strong message – we need more affordable health care, not less!

Join Us! Check out www.MainersforHealthCare.org to learn how you can get involved!