

Draft General Comms Plan – Medicaid Expansion

Top 6 reasons to expand (Talking points)

- **Increases access to mental health and substance use treatment**

- Unfortunately, North Carolina has never had adequate mental health services because it's unaffordable for most people. We can't fix that without expanding Medicaid.
- Mental illness is incredibly common.
 - Roughly 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental illness – that's about 2 million North Carolinians.
 - Yet, in 2019, more than 55% of people did not receive treatment – that's more than 1 million North Carolinians who went without care.
 - The number one reason people do not get the care they need is cost.
- Just like any other service or product – when not enough people pay for it – it is not available when you need it.
 - It's getting harder for people to find a mental health provider – 27 counties in NC do not have a psychiatrist.
- All of this leads to behavioral health patients waiting in emergency departments across the state. And for some, untreated mental illness can lead to homelessness, involvement with the justice system, trauma to children, increased physical health problems and inevitably will drive-up other costs – financial and moral.
- This problem demands our collective action. Starting with expanding Medicaid.

- **Builds a healthier workforce**

- Access to affordable health care helps more people participate more fully in our labor force
- When Michigan expanded Medicaid, they found that:
 - 69 percent of those who had jobs said they did better at work once they had health insurance through Medicaid expansion
- Studies show that Medicaid expansion helps more people with disabilities enter the workforce.
 - Without expansion, many people with disabilities must live in poverty to maintain their Medicaid eligibility. With Medicaid expansion, they can now enter the workforce, increase earnings, and maintain coverage
- Many small businesses can't afford to offer health coverage to employees – even in the best of times. Medicaid expansion can build a healthier workforce for businesses like child care, restaurants, and tourism that have been hit hard by the pandemic.
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- **Assists working families**

- 600,000 would get access to affordable health insurance with Medicaid expansion, many of them working families in every community in NC

- People are more likely to get regular checkups if they have insurance under Medicaid expansion. This means people get medicine for heart disease and diabetes, and they get early detection screening for cancer. These serious illnesses can be treated earlier, increasing survival rates.
- People who are able to get insurance because of Medicaid expansion are less likely to skip medications because of cost. They're less likely to screen positive for depression. And they're less likely to die within one year of being diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease.
- Studies from other states that have expanded Medicaid Expansion suggest that it saves lives
- Expanding Medicaid in NC would bring affordable health coverage to more than 100,000 low-income parents with children at home. When parents and caregivers have health insurance, children are more likely to be covered as well.
- It will help address disparities for people of color who are more likely to be uninsured, and will protect families from medical debt and unaffordable doctor's bills.

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- **Protects uninsured Veterans and their families**

- North Carolina has 730,357 Veterans. Fewer than half of those receive care through the VA
- Even if a Veteran receives health care through the VA their families may remain uninsured
- The number of uninsured veterans dropped 4.3 percentage points in expansion states.
- Medicaid Expansion could help approximately 14,000 additional North Carolina Veterans gain health coverage

- **Boosts rural health care, hospitals and families**

- Medicaid expansion supports rural healthcare by injecting funds that allow doctors and other medical providers to stay in business. It also covers previously uncompensated care that hospitals must provide for free.
 - It would address the rural hospital closure crisis (North Carolina has lost 11 rural hospitals since 2005, and uncompensated care from uninsured patients is a substantial financial burden on rural hospitals, and hospitals).
 - Expansion addresses medical deserts by retaining and supporting the existing workforce.
 - Compensating providers through Medicaid expansion strengthens the capacity and stability of our rural health care infrastructure.
- Keeping rural hospitals and providers open and stable helps make sure they are there when any of us need them.

- Medicaid expansion also gives hundreds of thousands of people in rural communities access to affordable health insurance while creating jobs in rural communities and boosting rural economies.
- Rural hospitals improve their finances and are less likely to close when Medicaid expands, studies show. Losing the only hospital in a county implies a decrease of about \$1,300 dollars in per capita income
- **Saves lives.**
 - People who are able to get insurance because of Medicaid expansion are less likely to skip medications because of cost. They're less likely to screen positive for depression. And they're less likely to die within one year of being diagnosed with end-stage renal disease. (Can we say kidney?)
 - People are more likely to get regular checkups if they have insurance under Medicaid expansion. This means people get medicine for heart disease and diabetes, and they get early detection screening for cancer. These serious illnesses can be treated earlier, increasing survival rates.
 - Many uninsured patients wait until they need emergency care to see a health professional. Expansion means people are more likely to get preventive care and less likely to skip their medications.
- **Brings money to NC**
 - If we expand Medicaid, an estimated \$8 billion in federal funding will come to NC each year at no cost to our state
 - The federal government pays 90% of the costs of Medicaid expansion

Additional social post content

Mental Health

- Medicaid expansion significantly improves the state's ability to address mental health and substance abuse. Oregon, Ohio, Louisiana, Iowa and Montana all reported improvements: (Suggest 1/many format)
 - [Oregon](#) found that the number of individuals receiving psychosocial services through Medicaid almost doubled after the state expanded Medicaid. After expansion, the odds of accessing psychosocial services increased 8% per year (for 2014 – 2016).
 - [Ohio](#) reports that Medicaid expansion increased their behavioral health system's capacity 60% over five years. In addition, new enrollees under expansion reported that Medicaid enabled their access to mental health services and that their mental health had improved since enrolling in Medicaid.
 - [Louisiana](#) reported that expansion resulted in an additional 25,000 adults receiving specialized outpatient mental health services and 4,000 adults receiving inpatient mental health services in the first year of the program. In addition, 4,000 adults received

specialized substance use outpatient services and another 4,000 adults received specialized substance use residential services.

- One [study](#) comparing states with Medicaid expansion, Iowa and Minnesota, to states without Medicaid expansion at the time, Nebraska and Wisconsin, found that Medicaid expansion states had 54% more telemental health claims per capita from 2014 through 2017 than non-expansion states.
- Kentucky has reduced their uninsured rate by 58% since expanding Medicaid. New Medicaid beneficiaries are more able to get care when they need it, including:
 - 30% increase in breast cancer screenings
 - 3% increase in cervical cancer screenings
 - 16% increase in colorectal cancer screening
 - 37% increase in adult dental visits
- [Montana](#) reported that expansion led to 65,000 new adults accessing preventive services, which includes mental health, among other things. In addition, Montana reported \$3.1 million in savings for mental health services after expansion and \$3.0 million for substance use disorder services. Nearly 10% of expansion spending was used to provide mental health and substance use disorder services (the number is likely higher if medications were included).
 - With Medicaid expansion now providing a payment source for behavioral health services, Montana's system is in the process of a deeply needed transformation. Between 2016 and 2020, Montana's budget for prevention doubled, and 59% of adults on Medicaid now receive primary care in a practice that also provides behavioral health services.
- States that expanded Medicaid saved money on mental health and substance use disorder services. (Commonwealth Fund report.)
- Expands access to mental health services. A study in Texas found insured people are up to 50% more likely to receive treatment for mental illness or substance abuse than their uninsured peers.
- Access to behavioral health treatment has also been shown to decrease unemployment and decrease criminal justice costs.
- Medicaid expansion has led to improvements in self-reported mental health, reductions in opioid overdose deaths, improved access to medications and services for treatment, Opioid treatment increases with no increase in opioid prescribing rates, increased behavioral health providers enrolling in Medicaid. (KFF analysis)

Child and Family Well Being

- Most of those who would be covered by Medicaid expansion are working — sometimes in multiple jobs— to make ends meet for their family, but don't earn enough to qualify for private marketplace health insurance.
- A lot of them work in essential jobs that we interact with every day, like child care, food service, construction, and nursing homes. Many are working parents, and thousands of them are parents of children with special needs.
- Expansion raises the income level at which a family of 3 qualifies to \$30,305.

- Parents having health insurance makes their children healthier too. Children are 29% more likely to have an annual well-child visit if their parents are enrolled in Medicaid.
- States that expanded Medicaid saw 422 fewer cases of reported neglect per 100,000 children under 6 than non-expansion states. Medicaid expansion is also linked to enhanced parental financial stability and access to mental health care in those states.
- Connects moms to comprehensive care. When moms are healthier, so are their families!
- May allow families to find care closer to home

Strong and Inclusive Workforce

- Those potentially covered by Medicaid Expansion include grocery store workers, people in retail jobs, hotel and restaurant employees, and child care workers.
- Creates a healthier workforce. More access to affordable preventive care means fewer people who can't work due to chronic disease, sickness, or injury.
- Working age adults with disabilities are especially vulnerable to gaps in the health insurance system.
- Compared with people without disabilities, they are more likely to be in poor health, have comorbid health conditions, and have lower income and employment
- Many people with disabilities have to live in poverty to qualify for Medicaid and can't afford private health insurance— which can keep people from participating in the workforce
- By expanding Medicaid, we can help more people with disabilities have affordable health insurance AND fully participate in the workforce and not have to choose.

One study has shown that people with disabilities are significantly more likely to be employed in states that have expanded Medicaid versus states that haven't