

1 HB432
2 206508-4
3 By Representatives Moore (M), Jackson, Boyd, Bracy, Drummond,
4 Hollis, Forte, McClammy, England, Givan, Daniels, Lawrence,
5 Clarke, Warren, Rafferty, Hatcher, Gray, Chestnut, Jones (S),
6 Rogers, Morris and McCampbell
7 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund
8 First Read: 23-FEB-21

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8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would expand the Medicaid program,
9 in light of our on going and rural health crisis,
10 to provide assistance to all persons for whom
11 matching funds are available to the state under the
12 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

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14 A BILL
15 TO BE ENTITLED
16 AN ACT

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18 Relating to Medicaid; to expand the program to
19 provide assistance to certain state residents; to direct the
20 Alabama Medicaid Agency to implement the expansion; to direct
21 other state agencies and entities to provide certain
22 assistance; and to provide for appropriations for adequate
23 funding.

24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

25 Section 1. The Legislature finds all of the
26 following:

1 (1) The question of how to provide comprehensive,
2 quality health care to all Alabamians regardless of income,
3 health status, age, or gender has been one the Alabama
4 Legislature has asked itself time and time again.

5 (2) The residents of this state are suffering
6 because of their lack of access to adequate health care.

7 (3) This lack of access has been even more evident
8 during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which time over 900,000
9 unemployment claims have been filed since March 2020.

10 (4) The COVID-19 pandemic in the State of Alabama
11 has been devastating to the state's economy and to the health
12 of all residents.

13 (5) As of February 22, 2021, the State of Alabama
14 has seen at least 486,843 cases of COVID-19 and has faced
15 9,592 deaths related to COVID-19 since the outbreak began
16 roughly one year ago.

17 (6) The people of Alabama have been hit hard, and it
18 is imperative that access to health care is expanded to ensure
19 the act of visiting a doctor does not result in financial
20 calamity for individuals or families.

21 (7) Reducing the number of uninsured patients
22 will keep hospitals open. Since 2011, 17 Alabama hospitals
23 have closed, 88 percent of these remaining rural hospitals are
24 operating in the red, and 75 percent of all Alabama hospitals
25 are operating in the red. These hospitals depend on federal
26 dollars to offset the cost of serving a high proportion

1 of low-income and uninsured patients; however, these patients
2 have suffered due to the state's failure to expand Medicaid.

3 (8) Broad access to health care leads to preventive
4 care, which produces healthier families, a healthier
5 workforce, and an all around healthier state.

6 (9) The federal government started paying 100
7 percent of the Medicaid expansion in 2014 under the Patient
8 Protection and Affordable Care Act. The federal government's
9 share dropped to 95 percent in 2017, and ultimately to 90
10 percent in 2020.

11 (10) With the expansion of Medicaid, approximately
12 397,000 uninsured Alabamians would be eligible to receive
13 low-cost health insurance with a majority of these residents
14 employed. Covering low-income adults would also reduce the
15 burden of medical debt, currently the leading cause of
16 personal bankruptcy.

17 (11) Expansion of Medicaid will result in reduced
18 state spending on health care related services to those
19 previously uninsured residents with incomes below 133 percent
20 of the federal poverty level.

21 (12) Expansion of Medicaid will also increase
22 coverage and access to health care for our veteran population
23 to support and supplement the cost for their medical and
24 mental health needs.

25 (13) In addition to enhancing access to health care,
26 expansion of Medicaid would promote revenue and economic

1 activity in this state, resulting in the preservation and
2 creation of jobs.

3 (14) Studies have shown that a one dollar
4 (\$1) increase in federal spending on Medicaid yields an
5 additional 65 to 75 cents of economic activity.

6 (15) The Alabama Health Care Improvement Task Force,
7 created on April 6, 2015, by Executive Order No. 4,
8 unanimously recommended to the Governor to close Alabama's
9 health coverage gap, which the expansion of Medicaid would
10 achieve.

11 Section 2. (a) The Medicaid program shall provide
12 assistance to all persons who apply for and are determined to
13 be eligible for assistance and for whom federal matching funds
14 are available to the state under the Patient Protection and
15 Affordable Care Act, Public Law 111-148, March 23, 2010, as
16 amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act 4
17 of 2010, Public Law 111-152, March 30, 2010.

18 (b) The Alabama Medicaid Agency shall take all steps
19 necessary to implement the Medicaid expansion program as
20 provided for in subsection (a) and shall be the lead agency
21 for the implementation in this state. The Alabama Medicaid
22 Agency shall seek assistance from any state or federal
23 agencies or entities to implement the program as appropriate,
24 and all state agencies and entities shall provide assistance
25 as requested by the agency.

26 (c) The Legislature shall annually appropriate
27 adequate funding to the Alabama Medicaid Agency for the

1 purpose of implementing and operating the Medicaid expansion
2 program pursuant to this act.

3 Section 3. This act shall become effective
4 immediately following its passage and approval by the
5 Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.