

1 HB447  
2 206508-3  
3 By Representatives Moore (M), Lawrence, Chestnut, Rafferty,  
4 Forte, Clarke, Daniels, Jones (S), Howard, Bracy, Jackson,  
5 Boyd, Morris, Hollis, Drummond, Hatcher, Gray, Rogers, Hall,  
6 Givan and Coleman  
7 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund  
8 First Read: 12-MAR-20

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

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

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

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. The Legislature finds all of the  
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) Reducing the number of uninsured patients  
8           will keep hospitals open. Since 2011, 17 Alabama hospitals  
9           have closed, 88 percent of these remaining rural hospitals are  
10          operating in the red, and 75 percent of all Alabama hospitals  
11          are operating in the red. These hospitals depend on federal  
12          dollars to offset the cost of serving a high proportion  
13          of low-income and uninsured patients; however, these patients  
14          have suffered due to the state's failure to expand Medicaid.

15          (4) The World Health Organization has classified  
16          COVID-19 as a pandemic, and a COVID-19 outbreak in the State  
17          of Alabama could be devastating to the state's economy and the  
18          health of all residents.

19          (5) The United States government declared the novel  
20          coronavirus a public health emergency on February 4, 2020.

21          (6) Failing to expand Medicaid ensures that many  
22          Alabamians that may become infected will go undiagnosed and  
23          untreated: People for whom going to the doctor would result in  
24          financial calamity tend not to do so before their health  
25          circumstances become dire.

1 (7) Broad access to health care leads to preventive  
2 care, which produces healthier families, a healthier  
3 workforce, and an all around healthier state.

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

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

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

19 (11) In addition to enhancing access to health care,  
20 expansion of Medicaid would promote revenue and economic  
21 activity in this state, resulting in the preservation and  
22 creation of jobs.

23 (12) Studies have shown that a one dollar  
24 (\$1) increase in federal spending on Medicaid yields an  
25 additional 65 to 75 cents of economic activity.

26 (13) The Alabama Health Care Improvement Task Force,  
27 created on April 6, 2015, by Executive Order No. 4,

1       unanimously recommended to the Governor to close Alabama's  
2       health coverage gap, which the expansion of Medicaid would  
3       achieve.

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

11              (b) The Alabama Medicaid Agency shall take all steps  
12      necessary to implement the Medicaid expansion program as  
13      provided for in subsection (a) and shall be the lead agency  
14      for the implementation in this state. The Alabama Medicaid  
15      Agency shall seek assistance from any state or federal  
16      agencies or entities to implement the program as appropriate,  
17      and all state agencies or entities shall provide assistance as  
18      requested by the agency.

19              (c) The Legislature shall annually appropriate  
20      adequate funding to the Alabama Medicaid Agency for the  
21      purpose of implementing and operating the Medicaid expansion  
22      program pursuant to this act.

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