

## What is Medicaid?

Medicaid is a public health insurance program covering millions of Americans, including about **235,000 Nebraskans**. To be eligible for Medicaid, a person must have a low income and fit into an eligibility category based on a characteristic like being a child, a parent, a senior (over age 65), a pregnant woman, or someone who has a disability.

## What is Medicaid Expansion?

Certain groups of people can't be eligible for Medicaid under traditional Medicaid rules, even if they have low incomes. Specifically, childless adults don't fit into a Medicaid eligibility category, and many low-income parents make too much money to qualify for Medicaid. At the same time, many of these uninsured people don't make enough money to qualify for financial help that would let them buy private insurance on the Health Insurance Marketplace, leaving them stuck in a **"coverage gap."**<sup>1</sup>

States have the option to expand Medicaid to make sure the people who are stuck in this coverage gap can get the health insurance they need.<sup>2</sup> Thirty-two states and Washington D.C. have expanded Medicaid, but Nebraska still has not.

## Who would be covered by Medicaid expansion?

Medicaid expansion would cover more than 90,000 Nebraskans living across the state in both rural and urban areas. The vast majority of Nebraskans eligible for Medicaid expansion are working but in jobs that pay low wages and don't provide insurance, like in restaurants and shops, in home health care, on construction sites, and on farms and ranches. Many of these people could work more hours and improve their circumstances if they had a way to get medical care and be healthier.

## What benefits would Medicaid expansion bring to Nebraska?

States that have expanded Medicaid have seen it is a proven tool to increase access to health care, boost local economies, keep hospitals open, and sustain jobs. The federal government pays for 90 percent of the cost of Medicaid expansion, with the state paying the remaining 10 percent. If Nebraska expanded Medicaid, we would bring home over \$1 billion and create and sustain over 10,000 jobs.<sup>3</sup> Medicaid expansion would also create significant savings in public programs like behavioral health and corrections.<sup>4</sup>

Our state is strongest when all Nebraskans have the chance to be healthy, and it's hard to stay healthy without health insurance. Expanding Medicaid is a long-overdue solution that would allow our hard-working friends and neighbors to get the health care everyone needs. Making sure everyone can get health insurance is vital to Nebraska having a healthy workforce, a strong economy, and thriving communities that leave no one behind.

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<sup>1</sup> In Nebraska, parents making over \$1,005/month (for a household of three) aren't eligible for Medicaid. But, they would have to make \$1,732/month to buy insurance on the Marketplace. Childless adults making under \$1,012/month aren't eligible for Medicaid or the Health Insurance Marketplace.

<sup>2</sup> Medicaid expansion would cover parents between 58-138% FPL (\$1,005 - \$2,390/month for household of three) and childless adults between 0-138% FPL (\$0- \$1,397/month for household of one).

<sup>3</sup> Legislative Fiscal Office, LB 441 Fiscal Note, Rev. 1, March 8, 2017, [https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/Current/PDF/FN/LB441\\_20170308-103020.pdf](https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/Current/PDF/FN/LB441_20170308-103020.pdf); Jim P. Stimpson, "Medicaid Expansion in Nebraska Under the Affordable Care Act," UNMC Center for Health Policy, August 2012, <http://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/chp/research/medicaidexpansion.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Legislative Fiscal Office, LB 441 Fiscal Note, Rev. 1, March 8, 2017, [https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/Current/PDF/FN/LB441\\_20170308-103020.pdf](https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/Current/PDF/FN/LB441_20170308-103020.pdf)