

Legislative
Bulletin



#CLOSETHEGAPNC

for

600,000

NORTH
CAROLINIANS

Healthcare can't wait

NORTH CAROLINA
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Faith and Medicaid Expansion

What scripture says:

- Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you received, freely give. Matthew 10:8
- Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. Luke 9:1-2
- "For I will restore you to health. And I will heal you of your wounds," declares the Lord, "Because they have called you an outcast, saying: 'It is Zion; no one cares for her.'" Jeremiah 30:17
- The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

The faith tradition the Council represents follows the original universal healthcare provider. Time and time again the sick came to him or were brought to him and "he cured them." He didn't ask about their preexisting conditions, out-of-network premiums, PPO or HMO, or lifetime deductible. Those are just gimmicks that keep us from being well.

The Council's View on Healthcare

The Council has worked on the healthcare issues for decades. A policy statement adopted in 1992 reads in part:

Christian people must be deeply concerned about these deficiencies in health care, especially as they impact the most vulnerable people in our society: the poor, children, people of color, and the elderly. The gospels tell us that Jesus "went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and infirmity among the people" (Matthew 4:23). They also tell of Jesus' concern for the poor, the children, and those on the margins of society. Thus, healing and health have long been included in the mission of the church. In our day this must involve advocacy for a just and humane health care system.



The Council called for healthcare over twenty years ago. As followers of the Gospel and the commandments, we must lead the effort to extend life-saving care for all in our communities "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8)

Medicaid Expansion Facts

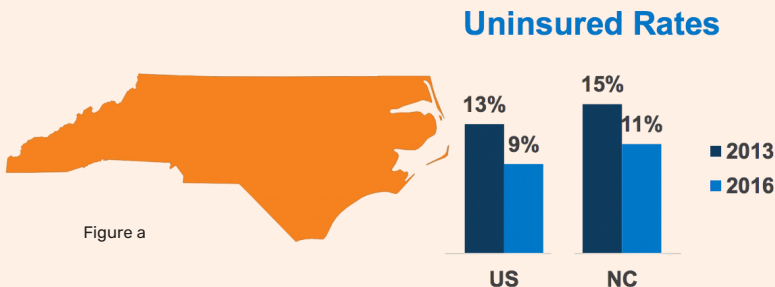


Figure a

500,000 people in North Carolina make too little to afford health insurance, and too much to qualify for Medicaid, causing a gap in coverage.

The Affordable Care Act provides subsidies to people of modest means, but gives money to states to expand Medicaid programs to cover those in the gap. **North Carolina does not accept this money.**

1

In NC, Medicaid Covers:

1 in 8 adults, ages 19-64

2 in 5 children

5 in 8 nursing home residents

3 in 8 individuals with disabilities

1 in 6 Medicare beneficiaries

Figure c

37 states have expanded Medicaid.

In these states, individuals with limited resources have access to health insurance and medical care.³



Expanding Medicaid would bring 43,000 jobs to North Carolina. It would bring \$4 billion in federal funding annually to our state.⁴

10.1 million
total NC population

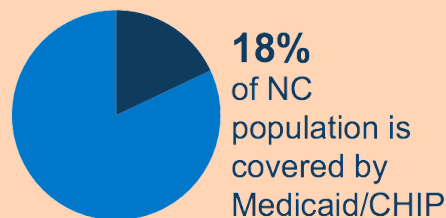
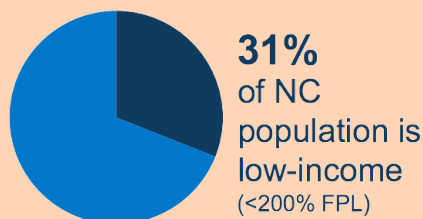


Figure b

Approximately **three out of every five uninsured children** in North Carolina (186,000) are eligible for, but not enrolled in, Medicaid or NC Health Choice.²

**IN NORTH CAROLINA
MEDICAID STATISTICS**

Healthcare is a right. All of us should have the ability to take care of ourselves and our families. When people cannot make safe healthcare decisions everyone pays. Allowing individuals to fall into the insurance gap drives up costs for everyone.

Talking Points on Closing the Gap⁶

Closing the healthcare coverage by expanding access to Medicaid would:

- Cover more than **half a million North Carolinians** who make too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to get help to buy a private plan.
- Reduce the number of uninsured, including **working families and veterans**.
- Equip NC to **address the opioid epidemic** by providing access to substance use disorder treatment and behavioral health services.
- Increase access to **low-cost primary care** and **preventive screenings**, which reduces dependence on emergency rooms and increases diagnosis of and treatment for medical conditions.
- **Create jobs** and **economic activity** for our entire state.
- Recruit billions in federal funding, **increase state revenue**.
- Reduce uncompensated care costs for our **struggling rural hospitals**.
- Promote **financial security** for patients by reducing medical debt.
- **Reduce premiums** for half a million North Carolinians who buy their own individual private health plans.



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1.. Progress NC, WLOS: NC Democrats introduce bills to expand Medicaid, 2019

2. North Carolina Institute of Medicine, Expanding Access to Health Care in North Carolina, 2017
3,4,5. Progress NC, WLOS: NC Democrats introduce bills to expand Medicaid, 2019

Figure a,b,c. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Medicaid in North Carolina, November 2018

6. Health Advocacy Project, The NC Justice Center, The Benefits of Closing the Coverage Gap by Expanding Access to Medicaid Coverage, May 2017