

## **Medicaid Expansion helps our local hospitals, providers, and community**

Medicaid expansion has taken center stage in Topeka, and we want to ensure that our communities understand how expansion would help our local hospitals, providers and the people we serve.

All of our organizations are dedicated to fully supporting our communities and our state, and the most important benefit of expansion is providing health insurance to 150,000 working Kansans. These are our neighbors who either make too much to qualify for traditional Medicaid or don't make enough to afford insurance. If they do purchase insurance, it is often with an extremely high deductible that covers only the most catastrophic hospitalizations.

Look around our communities, and you will see friends and neighbors who would benefit from insuring those 150,000 Kansans through Medicaid expansion: waitresses, cooks, retail clerks, entrepreneurs who are just getting started, young farmers or ranchers working to turn a profit, artists, construction workers, or people working multiple part-time jobs to make ends meet – plus employees of small businesses that cannot afford to offer health insurance, those who work on a contract basis, or even state employees.

Those who are opposed to expansion have raised questions related to abuse, fairness, and overall business sense. Abuse happens with any program, governmental or otherwise. We prefer to focus on those who will be finally able to go to a primary care doctor for care instead of the emergency room and those who will be able to afford medications to keep conditions under control or improve their health. Concerns about fairness center around larger facilities receiving more funds than smaller hospitals. Larger facilities will indeed receive more funds, but that's a function of math and volumes – not fairness. A struggling rural hospital would benefit from an additional \$200,000. Would expansion two years ago have prevented the closures of hospitals in Independence, Fort Scott, Oswego, and now Horton? It's hard to tell, but it certainly would have helped.

Another argument is that hospitals lose money on every Medicaid patient. Some wonder how hospitals would benefit under those circumstances. Again, simple math shows that some payment (through expansion) is better than no payment.

Remember that expansion dollars go to our local hospitals and providers – they are not “handouts” to individuals. A study by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment found that our three hospitals would each gain an average of \$400,000 per year under expansion. These are real dollars that could be reinvested back into our organizations via people, equipment upgrades or new technology.

Kansas is one of only 14 states that have not expanded or are not in the process of expanding Medicaid. Thirty-six states have expanded, including Indiana – and the governor at the time of expansion was Vice President Mike Pence. Since January 2014, Kansas has bypassed more than \$3.1 billion in federal funds because of our failure to expand Medicaid. As Kansas citizens pay

our federal taxes, we are already paying into the Medicaid Expansion account. Because we have not expanded Medicaid in our state, our tax dollars allocated by the federal government for this program are going to the 36 other states that have expanded.

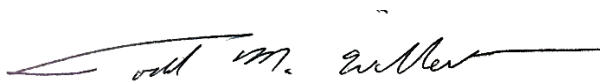
Expansion is not Obamacare or Republican vs. Democrat. It's not about one political side "winning." It's about taking advantage of an opportunity to do the right thing for Kansas communities and citizens.



Kiley A. Floyd, CEO  
Nemaha Valley Community Hospital



Carrie Saia, CEO  
Holton Community Hospital



Todd M. Willert, CEO  
Community HealthCare System NE Kansas