

# It's time to take a second look at Medicaid expansion in Wyoming. With **54 million dollars on the line** and the chance to offer health coverage to **25,000 Wyoming residents**, the game has changed.



We are facing an unprecedented economic crisis and the federal government is giving us an unprecedented opportunity to bring some of our federal tax dollars home to Wyoming. The Wyoming Department of Health estimates overall net savings of \$34 million State General Funds over the first biennium of expansion. The benefits outweigh the objections: **Medicaid expansion would help us solve our budget deficit, support our small businesses, allow our low-wage workers to access health coverage and move us toward giving everyone an equal chance to be healthy.**

## Medicaid Expansion Will Benefit Wyoming

- » **There are more federal funds than ever for WY if we expand Medicaid.** The new federal incentives available for states that newly-expand Medicaid will equate to \$54 million for Wyoming, which will pay for the state's share of expansion and then some. This is on top of the federal government's promise to pay 90% of the cost of expansion into perpetuity.
- » **Expansion would offer health coverage only to those who need it.** In Wyoming, those are overwhelmingly low-wage workers like our restaurant servers, grocery store cashiers, and hotel desk clerks. In fact, in other states that recently expanded, like Maine, Nebraska, Utah, and Virginia, enrollment was *lower* than projected, with most people who gained coverage being workers.
- » **Our small businesses will benefit from Medicaid expansion.** Historically, small businesses have struggled to offer affordable health coverage to employees. With expansion, they can focus on economic security while providing health coverage.

## Medicaid Expansion in Montana

*Montana expanded Medicaid in 2015. Since then, it has produced huge gains in their state budget and improved Montanans' health and wellbeing. It's been so successful that lawmakers reauthorized expansion for 4 more years.*

- » According to a 2019 **study** from the University of Montana, expansion produced \$207 million in savings to the state over five years.
- » Medicaid expansion helped cut Montana's uninsured rate in half and increased jobs in the health care sector, especially in rural parts of the state.
- » Medicaid expansion brought roughly \$650 million of new money into Montana's economy. This new influx of dollars rippled to other parts of the economy, with a total impact of expansion on Montana's workers likely exceeding \$400 million in 2019.
- » Expansion also **boosted** employment among those who have gained coverage in Montana. In total, 22,000 Montanans enrolled in a workforce development program in the program's first three years.

**Now is the time.** Though out-of-state organizations like the Foundation for Government Accountability are using debunked information that they know is incorrect to dissuade Wyoming from expanding, the Wyoming House of Representatives, many members of which have long opposed expansion, voted to send this bill to the Senate because they know what is true and clear: there is no other solution. **Wyoming must expand Medicaid.**

## Out-of-state groups like the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA) don't have Wyomingites' best interests at heart. That's up to you.

FGA opposes Medicaid expansion in Wyoming, even though they are an organization based in Florida known for producing false and misleading information about Medicaid and other public programs. Their analysis has been called “**bogus**,” “**highly misleading**,” “**fundamentally flawed**,” “**oversimplistic and exaggerated**,” “**absurd**” and “**a parade of alternative facts designed to obscure the simple truth**” by such credible sources as a federal judge, a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist, and both liberal and conservative legislators and analysts. There's no reason they should have a say in what happens in Wyoming.

### Here's the truth about Medicaid's impact on people with disabilities:

- » Expanding Medicaid will **make it easier** for Wyoming to help people with disabilities get the care they need in their home or community instead of in a long-term care facility and/or to enhance the services provided to Wyomingites with disabilities.
- » There is **no link** between a state's waiting list for home- and community-based services and a state's decision to expand Medicaid. An FGA spokesperson has even admitted this under oath!
- » **All 10 states** that do not have a waiting list for home- and community-based services are also states that expanded Medicaid.
- » In states that have expanded Medicaid, people with disabilities have greater access to health coverage. Expansion has been critical for people with physical and mental disabilities who are not receiving federal disability benefits, as well as some who receive federal disability benefits but must wait two years for their Medicare benefits to kick in. The process to apply for federal disability benefits is onerous and long, leaving many low-income adults with disabilities without needed care and the ability to be healthy for far too long in states that have not taken up Medicaid expansion.
- » In addition to the \$54 million for expanding Medicaid, the American Recovery Plan Act also provides a bump in federal funds for Medicaid home- and community-based services that help people with disabilities receive care to stay at home. In order to receive these funds, states must use them to enhance, expand or strengthen these programs. This provision will bring an additional **\$19.8 million** to improve care for people with disabilities to Wyoming in the coming year.

In reality, Medicaid expansion is what Wyoming needs. The new federal funds will help us solve our budget crisis. It will support our low-wage workers and small businesses and give our economy a boost. No matter what out-of-state interest groups say, our policymakers know what's right for Wyoming.

**Medicaid expansion is right for Wyoming.**