



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**
Mid America

Medicaid Expansion

Position: The National MS Society supports **Medicaid Expansion** in Nebraska through **LB577 (Campbell)** and **LB 578 (Nordquist)** so that Nebraskans have access to affordable, comprehensive health care.

Medicaid

Right now Medicaid only covers low-income Nebraskans that are over age 65, blind, disabled, or a child. It offers prescription drug coverage and standard medical benefits like physician and hospital care; home- and community-based services that allow people with MS to remain independent and avoid premature admission to costlier institutional facilities; and other forms of long-term services and support.

Medicaid in Nebraska

- 253,474 Nebraskans currently enrolled in Medicaid
- 14 % of these enrollees are disabled
- 16 % of are also enrolled Medicare

Medicaid Expansion

The Affordable Care Act sought to simplify Medicaid eligibility and provide coverage to all persons with income below 133%/138% of the federal poverty level or \$15,415 for an individual.

MS and Medicaid

Many of the people living with MS relying on Medicaid when first diagnosed were working and accessing private coverage. About 60% of people with MS cannot work ten years after their diagnosis.

[LB 577](#) (Campbell) Expanding the Medicaid program to cover low-income individuals at 138% of the federal poverty level (\$15,415 for an individual).

[LB 578](#) (Nordquist) Provides funding to the expansion of Medicaid by redirecting funds previously used to subsidize health insurance coverage for Nebraskans with pre-existing conditions (about \$23 million per year starting in 2014).

The National MS Society believes that Medicaid expansion will have a significant, positive impact on many, including the millions of Americans affected by multiple sclerosis.

Background

- Right now Medicaid only covers low-income Nebraskans that are over age 65, blind, disabled, or a child.
- This new expanded program is for working Nebraskans in minimum and low-wage jobs who don't qualify now for public health care programs, who can't afford coverage on their own, and who won't be eligible for tax credits in the exchange.

It is the right thing to do.

- At least 54,000 uninsured Nebraskans would gain health care access through this program and an estimated 500 lives would be saved

It will grow the economy.

- It will generate \$700 million in new economic activity in Nebraska.
- The federal government will pay 100% of the cost from 2014 to 2016 and will continue to pay 90% from there on.
- If Nebraska chooses not to expand Medicaid, the federal funding that should be coming to Nebraska can be shifted to finance programs in other states.

Without it, thousands of Nebraskans will fall in a coverage gap.

- Without Medicaid expansion, tens of thousands of Nebraskans will continue to go without coverage and will continue to access health care inefficiently through expensive emergency room visits which drive up costs for everyone.

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