



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Support Medicaid Expansion To 138% and In Turn Support Ohio's Economic Future

What is multiple sclerosis (MS)?

- MS is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system.
- MS interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body.
- Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis.
- The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted.
- Approximately 20,000 Ohioans are living with MS.

The financial impact of MS on individuals and families can be devastating.

- MS is typically diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, when most are raising families, advancing careers and maximizing their earnings. Yet studies show that only 40% are in the workforce ten years after their diagnosis, and some lost access to employer-based health coverage.
- The average annual cost for someone with MS in the U.S. including both direct and indirect costs (i.e. lost wages) is approximately \$69,000. Of this, approximately \$39,000 consists of health care costs.
- Seventy percent of persons with MS report difficulty paying for health care, even with health insurance and many are forced to delay doctor visits and split their medication doses or skip them altogether.
- After years of paying to manage their disease, some people with MS have spent the vast majority of their earnings and savings, making their financial situation so dire that they meet Medicaid's low income eligibility requirements.

Position: The National Multiple Sclerosis Society urges full expansion of Medicaid pursuant to the Affordable Care Act so that **all qualified Ohioans have access to affordable, comprehensive health care.**

The Affordable Care Act sought to simplify Medicaid eligibility and provide coverage to all persons with income below 133% of the federal poverty level. The U.S. Supreme Court decision rendered the Medicaid expansion a state option. Governor John Kasich has recommended Medicaid Expansion in his Biennium Budget.

Expanding Medicaid is a smart investment that could provide up to 270,000 currently uninsured Ohioans including people with MS affordable, comprehensive coverage and put Ohio's federal tax dollars back to work in Ohio.

- Of the 270,000 uninsured people expected to be covered by Medicaid in Ohio, approximately 1,200 are estimated to live with MS.
- All Ohioans currently pay a price for uncompensated care. For instance higher charges to patients with private health insurance offset uncompensated care. Opening Medicaid enrollment will reduce the cost our state and taxpayers currently pay for uncompensated care by as much as \$2.3 billion through 2019.
- The Medicaid expansion will bring more than \$23.8 billion in additional federal funds to Ohio's economy through 2019. These dollars will support Ohio's vital health care economy including hospitals and health systems, and the hundreds of thousands of people they employ. Our economy will also benefit from a healthier workforce and job applicants.

National MS Society, Ohio Chapters • 1.800.FIGHT MS

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