



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Medicaid Expansion

Position: Leverage federal dollars to provide health insurance to low-income North Carolinians; an investment that could provide up to 500,000 individuals, including people with MS, affordable, comprehensive coverage.

Medicaid

Medicaid provides health coverage to nearly 9 million non-elderly individuals with disabilities. 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 North Carolina

- Total enrollment: >1.5 Million
- Percentage enrollees disabled: 17 percent
- Number enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid: 317,000

Medicaid Expansion

The Affordable Care Act sought to simplify Medicaid eligibility and provide coverage to all persons with income below 138 percent of the federal poverty level. The U.S. Supreme Court decision rendered the Medicaid expansion a state option.

- ❖ Multiple Sclerosis (MS) typically is diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, when most are raising families, advancing careers and maximizing their earnings.
- ❖ MS experts recommend people living with MS should begin treatment with one of the disease-modifying medications as soon as possible. Benefits of these medications may include:
 - Reduction in numbers of new lesions;
 - Reduction in the number of exacerbations (also called relapses, attacks, flare-ups);
 - **Reduction in progression of disability; and**
 - **Probable reduction in future disease activity and improvement in quality of life.**
- ❖ **The financial impact of MS on individuals and families can be devastating.** 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.
- ❖ In 2014, 68% of the states that expanded Medicaid had percentage declines in disability claims greater than 10%. Arkansas and Kentucky saw declines of disability claims of 16.8% and 15.0% respectively.
- ❖ People in expansion states no longer have to apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to get Medicaid. In addition, experts say that being able to access treatment for mental or physical health issues with newly acquired Medicaid coverage means more people can stay in the workforce.

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