



Join the Movement to Expand Medicaid

Our movement began last summer, when we painted a 1977 Dodge camper bright green and labeled both sides with the catchphrase “Medicaid for Idaho.” Beginning in the Panhandle, we drove southward to every corner of the state and visited over 20 communities.

Since then, we’ve come a long way. Our campaign has been covered by local radio, TV, and newspapers across the state. On the national level, we’ve been covered by US News, Associated Press, and the Chicago Tribune. To date, we have 800 subscribers to our mailing list, over 2,000 Facebook followers, over 250 financial contributors, and volunteer teams forming in 15 different localities.

Our next step is to launch a petition campaign to put Medicaid expansion on the ballot in November 2018. Maine recently became the first state to expand Medicaid by ballot initiative. Idaho can be next.

Here are three reasons to join this movement.

1. There is a healthcare crisis in Idaho.

On the road last summer, we heard heart-wrenching stories from Idahoans living without access to affordable healthcare. We met young single mothers working two and three jobs to cover medical bills of relatives while also trying to raise children. We met cashiers and cooks who had received Medicaid when unemployed, but found it impossible to find affordable healthcare as soon as they found employment. We met people who will leave this state that they love, and who will leave family behind, simply because they can’t find affordable health care in Idaho.

Currently, an estimated 78,000 Idahoans fall into the “Medicaid gap,” meaning that they earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to afford insurance on the state health care exchange. Expanding Medicaid would extend healthcare to the 78,000 who desperately need it.

2. Medicaid Expansion is good economics.

A report by the Idaho Workgroup on Medicaid Redesign, commissioned by Governor Otter, predicts that Medicaid Expansion would support over 14,000 jobs and generate \$46 million per year in new revenue. Moreover, Medicaid Expansion would save millions for the state general fund by relieving the costs of state-funded indigent care services.

Opponents of Medicaid Expansion commonly ask: Who will pay for it? The truth is that *we are already paying for it.* Our federal tax dollars are currently funding the Medicaid expansions of other states. In the first year alone, Medicaid Expansion would bring over \$720 million of our own tax dollars back into Idaho.

3. Medicaid Expansion is popular and nonpartisan.

Our state lawmakers have balked at the idea of Medicaid expansion, but the vast majority of Idaho voters say they are disappointed with the failure of the Idaho Legislature to address the Medicaid issue. A recent Boise State survey found that 70 percent of Idahoans favor legislative action to close the Medicaid gap. Medicaid expansion has enjoyed substantial support from voters in both parties. Eleven states led by Republicans have expanded Medicaid.

We can win. Last summer, when we joined the statewide conversation about the need to close Idaho’s Medicaid gap, we found widespread support all across Idaho. Today, a grassroots movement led by people in every corner of the state is taking action to expand access to affordable healthcare. We hope you’ll join us by visiting medicaidforidaho.org.