



November 8, 2018

### **Bazelon Center Applauds Adoption of Medicaid Expansion by Three New States**

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law celebrates the passage of Medicaid expansion ballot initiatives in three states: Proposition 2 in Idaho, Initiative 427 in Nebraska, and Proposition 3 in Utah. Thanks to the decisions of these voters to expand Medicaid, hundreds of thousands of low income people will gain access to affordable and comprehensive health care, including mental health and substance use disorder services. While we are disappointed that Montana did not approve an initiative to extend its Medicaid expansion, we hope that the state legislature will work out a solution that continues Medicaid Expansion in that state. "Currently, 36 states and the District of Columbia have expanded or voted to expand," said Bethany Lilly, Deputy Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy. "Approximately a third of individuals covered by the Medicaid expansion in most states have behavioral health conditions and the expansion has been shown to greatly improve health outcomes for these individuals."

We are encouraged at the record number of voters across the country who came out to the polls to make their voices heard. The right to vote is key to ensuring the protection of all other rights, and the Bazelon Center will continue to play a lead role in supporting the voting rights of people with mental disabilities. "Voting is the one of the most important rights we exercise," said Holly O'Donnell, CEO. "It's crucially important as we move forward that we ensure that voting is easy and accessible for all Americans, including those with disabilities."

"We plan to continue our work to ensure that the protections of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid and the Americans with Disabilities Act are preserved," said Jennifer Mathis, Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy. "We remain concerned about legislative and administrative efforts to roll back parts of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid, and we will stay vigilant about legislative attacks on the ADA."

As we move forward, the Bazelon Center stands ready to fight for what is right.