

Resolution: Supporting Medicaid Expansion in Alabama

WHEREAS Alabama Nurses know the needs of the individual patients who we see. We see the difficulties experienced by families. We feel powerless to effect change in insurance coverage or revenue streams in our own hospitals or those in rural parts of the state.

WHEREAS With expansion of Medicaid in Alabama there will be fewer persons falling through the cracks in the system. There will be more funding for rural hospitals and indeed all hospitals. With more funding there may be better resources for staffing or practice innovations which in turn would increase quality, safety, and efficiency of care. There will be a boost to Alabama's healthcare and economy.

WHEREAS Numerous Alabama healthcare partners support Medicaid expansion: The Alabama Hospital Association (alaha.org) estimates that the additional funds would bring in more than \$11 billion over four years. In addition there would be another \$316 billion in savings to state-paid services (AlaHA, 2019).

WHEREAS The Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in their legislative advocacy 2019 agenda supports the expansion of Medicaid and funding of Medicaid and CHIP. They cite studies done by Alabama universities on the impact as providing healthcare access to 300,000 Alabamians and creating 30,000 jobs. Most importantly, they state, the children would have better outcomes, specifically in infant mortality which decreased in expansion states. Protection of funding for Medicaid and CHIP coverage is a permanent priority of the Alabama Chapter-AAP (AIAAP, 2019).

WHEREAS The Medical Association of State of Alabama (alabamamedicine.org) lists Medicaid Expansion on its 2019 State Legislative Agenda (MASA, 2019).

WHEREAS Thirteen rural Alabama hospitals have closed in recent years and many Alabama state legislators recognize the significance of Medicaid expansion to save our rural hospitals. When the Alabama Hospital Association's president announced closure of Georgiana Medical Center, he stated it is just another indicator of an untenable situation the costs to hospitals of providing healthcare without enough money being paid back. The situation has been described as hospitals "dying" and "on life support (Thornton, 2019)."

WHEREAS Infant mortality rates have dropped in states that have expanded Medicaid and have risen in those that have not. Fourteen states have not expanded Medicaid, and those that expanded Medicaid saw a reduction in infant mortality -- from 5.9 to 5.6 deaths per 100,000, while the rate slightly rose in nonexpansion states -- from 6.4 to 6.5 deaths per 100,000 (Quinn, 2019). Alabama's infant mortality rate of 9.1 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016 is higher than the 8.3 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015 (ADPH, 2019).

WHEREAS Medicaid Expansion and its effect should be a priority for ASNA's legislative agenda; therefore be it

RESOLVED That Alabama's State and Federal delegations be invited to contribute to a fair debate on this and related critical issues including Medicaid Expansion and/or other topics related to Alabama rural hospitals and infant mortality.

RESOLVED ASNA support Medicaid Expansion, and will inform its members of the status of Medicaid Expansion in Alabama and the pros and cons, if appropriate of various proposals that are considerations of the Alabama Legislature,

RESOLVED That Alabama nurses be encouraged to write their state representatives, senators and Alabama Governor Ivey and tell them their stories of Alabamians who would have benefitted from Medicaid expansion, of rural hospitals across our state and the good work they do, and ask them to support Medicaid Expansion in Alabama;

RESOLVED That the delegates of the ASNA State Convention encourage all Alabama nurses to be informed, exercise their civic responsibility, and speak from your heart in letters and public forums in your unique role as an Alabama Nurse!

Submitted June 13, 2019 by District 3 ASNA and Ellen Buckner PhD, RN, CNE, AE-C, FNAP
ASNA District 3, President

References

Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics [AlAAP] (2019). 2019 Alabama Chapter-AAP Legislative Agenda and Priorities. Retrieved from <https://www.alaap.org/legislative-advocacy-tools> .

Alabama Department of Public Health [ADPH] (2019). Infant mortality. Retrieved from <http://alabamapublichealth.gov/perinatal/infant-mortality.html>

Alabama Hospital Association [AlaHA](2019). Reports build strong case for Medicaid Expansion in Alabama. Retrieved from <https://www.alaha.org/medicaid/medicaid-expansion-alhealthmatters/> and <https://www.alaha.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OnePageReportsSummary.2.14.pdf>

Medical Association of the State of Alabama [MASA] (2019). 2019 State Agenda. Retrieved from <https://alabamamedicine.org/medical-association-announces-2019-state-and-federal-agendas/>

Quinn, M. (2019). Report: Babies are more likely to die in states that didn't expand Medicaid. Retrieved from <https://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-medicaid-expansion-maternal-infant-mortality.html> .

Thornton, W. (2019). Hospital closing highlights problems of rural healthcare. AL.com. Retrieved from <https://www.al.com/business/2019/02/hospital-closing-highlights-problems-of-rural-healthcare.html>