

## Hospitals Share Impact Medicaid Expansion would have on Alabama

If Alabama expands Medicaid, almost 300,000 uninsured Alabamians would receive health insurance coverage, an estimated 30,000 jobs would be created, and \$28 billion in new economic activity would be generated. Alabama would also save millions of dollars on current state services. For these reasons Alabama's hospitals are launching the ALhealthmatters campaign highlighting the importance of expanding Medicaid.

"On average, almost one out of every 10 hospital patients does not have health insurance, resulting in more than \$530 million annually in uncompensated care," said Danne Howard, executive vice president and chief policy officer of the Alabama Hospital Association. "Currently, 75 percent of Alabama's hospitals are operating in the red, meaning the dollars they receive for caring for patients are not enough to cover the cost of that care. Expanding Medicaid would be a significant investment in the state's fragile health care infrastructure and would help maintain access to care for everyone."

Howard adds that hospitals and other health care providers are a critical piece of the state's infrastructure. "Alabama's hospitals employ about 90,000 individuals and indirectly support another 96,000 jobs," she said. "Not only are they often one of the largest employers in their communities, but hospitals also have a huge economic impact on their local economy. Statewide, the annual economic impact of Alabama hospitals is nearly \$20 billion, not to mention the pivotal role access to quality health care plays in recruiting and keeping new businesses."

Throughout the next few months, hospitals will be talking with business, civic and government leaders to stress the importance of expanding Medicaid in Alabama and to share quantitative results of the positive impact it is having in other states.

Howard notes that a recent study showed that hospitals in expansion states were 84 percent less likely to close than hospitals in non-expansion states. "Alabama has had 12 hospitals close since 2011, and more are on the verge of closing if something doesn't change," she added. "Plus, the economic impact in other states has been tremendous; Louisiana has added 19,000 jobs; nearly 50 percent of new enrollees in Ohio have been able to receive mental health and substance abuse treatment, and the state has seen a 17-percent drop in emergency department use; Kentucky has seen an increase in state revenues of \$300 million."

For more information on the impact Medicaid expansion could have in Alabama, visit [www.alhealthmatters.com](http://www.alhealthmatters.com).

The Alabama Hospital Association, based in Montgomery, is a statewide trade organization that represents more than 100 hospitals and numerous other health care providers by offering services designed to enhance the provision of health care in Alabama.