

Sierra Verplancke

Psyc -1000-02-04

2023_InformationCreativity – Final Project

September 5, 2023

Casper is one of the few communities in Wyoming that provides a variety of specialty medical providers, including psychiatrists, neurologists, and several more types of medical specialists, however, due to the lack of affordable healthcare, many people in the community of Casper Wyoming are unable to utilize the specialist they may need. Many people do not have access to coverage through a job or do not meet the qualifications for Wyoming Medicaid. There are not only adults but children that could be hospitalized for conditions that could have been prevented with the use of primary care. I know I'm not the only person who knows the simple solution to the issue in Wyoming: Medicaid Expansion. So why is Wyoming, specifically Casper, one of the 11 states/communities that has not expanded Medicaid? Are we going to watch individuals have a life that we all know could be much longer, or watch individuals suffer because they are unable to afford medical care?

Our legislators aren't supportive of it. They believe it costs more money. They feel our marketplace is giving people the healthcare they need, not when they can't afford the premium or it has a \$10000-\$12000 deductible to meet before it starts to pay. So, people must pay that \$10000-\$12000 before any healthcare insurance kicks in. There needs to be stipulations on the expansion, have specific guidelines. People are not getting the healthcare they need making them get sick, in turn, they are not able to work. Not being able to work puts individuals in a position where they are not eligible for social security disability because it's not a disability and it takes years most of the time to get disability.

Across many of the metrics the Commonwealth Fund uses, Wyoming sits in the bottom half of states or even worse. According to the report, 1 in 10 children in Wyoming are uninsured, double the national average. A quarter of adults do not have a consistent source of care and 17% of Wyoming residents have medical debt, both above the national average. While Wyoming excels in some areas, such as youth mental health care, the report

largely paints the picture of a state that continues to struggle with healthcare costs and barriers to care, especially among minorities and those with low incomes. The high premiums may be due in part to the fact that there are only two health insurance companies on the Wyoming state exchange: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming and Mountain Health Co-op. In terms of overall plan cost for 2023, the analysis Medicaid is a healthcare program designed to assist individuals and families with low incomes in obtaining necessary medical care. Currently, Wyoming's Medicaid program only covers a very limited number of people, leaving thousands without access to affordable healthcare. This means that those who are most in need are left to struggle with high medical costs, often putting their health and financial stability at risk.

One of the main reasons why Wyoming should pass the Medicaid Expansion Act is to improve the health and well-being of its citizens. Without access to affordable healthcare, many individuals and families delay seeking medical care until their conditions worsen, resulting in higher healthcare costs in the long run. This not only affects the individuals directly, but it also puts a strain on the entire healthcare system. By expanding Medicaid, more people will have access to preventative care, reducing the burden on emergency rooms and preventing costly hospitalizations.

Moreover, expanding Medicaid will also have significant economic benefits for Wyoming. In states that have already expanded the program, there has been a substantial boost to the economy. A study by the Wyoming Department of Health estimated that expanding Medicaid would generate over 800 new jobs and \$80 million in economic activity in the first year alone. These benefits would continue to grow as more people have access to healthcare, leading to a healthier and more productive workforce.

In addition, passing the Medicaid Expansion Act would also provide relief for struggling healthcare providers in Wyoming. With a limited number of individuals covered by Medicaid, hospitals and healthcare providers must often absorb the costs of treating uninsured patients. This leads to higher healthcare costs for everyone and puts a strain on the resources of these providers. By expanding Medicaid, these providers would be reimbursed for their services, allowing them to continue to provide quality care for all patients.

Opponents of Medicaid expansion argue that it would be a burden on the state's budget. However, the federal government has promised to cover 90% of the costs of expansion, leaving only 10% to be covered by

the state. Moreover, the economic benefits of expansion, including job creation and increased tax revenue, would far outweigh this cost.

Furthermore, expanding Medicaid would also provide coverage to the “working poor” who do not currently qualify for traditional Medicaid but cannot afford to purchase private insurance. These individuals often work low-paying jobs that do not offer health insurance, leaving them with no options for affordable healthcare. Expanding Medicaid would give these hardworking individuals and families the security of knowing that they can access healthcare when needed, without worrying about financial ruin.

In conclusion, Wyoming should pass the Medicaid Expansion Act to address its healthcare crisis and improve the lives of its citizens. The expansion would not only benefit the health and well-being of individuals and families, but it would also have positive economic impacts on the state. It is time for Wyoming to put the health and financial stability of its citizens first by expanding Medicaid and providing access to affordable healthcare for all.