

Interview Questions: Jodi Verplancke: Social worker at Johnson County Healthcare Center

1. What challenges may arise in implementing the Medicaid Expansion Act in Wyoming, and how can they be addressed?

People taking advantage of it. There needs to be specific guidelines/qualifications on the expansion such as specific diagnosis like cancer, Parkinson's disease, that require expensive medications and treatments. Not just have it for anyone who falls in the financial qualification. Currently if you have a disability per the social security program you can get Medicaid, however not all patients with cancer, Parkinson's disease, etc have a disability. Inability to work full time due to medical diagnosis and get insurance from employment and can't afford the premium and deductible on the healthcare.gov insurances. Ensuring adequate funding for the program to sustain it could be a potential challenge as well.

2. What are some of the key reasons that other states have already passed the Medicaid Expansion Act?

To help with hospitals being paid to keep them open. Hospitals have to write off a great deal of expenses due to inability to pay, which in turn causes financial strain on hospitals. To ensure more people get the medical care and medications they need so that they are not hospitalized and hospitals have to write off so much.

3. What are the potential risks of not passing the act?

Many people going without care. Wyoming has an aging population in many of its rural areas, yet are not the Medicare age of 65, usually fall between 45-65 and are going without care, have to be hospitalized and the small rural hospitals will not get paid, have to write off several dollars risking closing more small rural hospitals. When we have to close the small rural hospitals than people have to travel for their medical care several miles, which some are unable to drive that far or afford gas and possibly hotels to go see doctors and receive their medical care.