



3902 Davenport St. Suite 200, Omaha, NE 68131
402.715.4171 | www.hollandmovement.org

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For More Information

JohnCarl Denkovich
(402) 715-4173

Nebraskans Deserve Medicaid Expansion, Without Delay

Through November 2018 ballot measure 427 a majority of Nebraskans approved Medicaid expansion. The state subsequently submitted a "state plan amendment" (SPA) for the expansion on April 1, 2019. The SPA delays implementation until October 1, 2020, in order to allow time for the state to seek a Section 1115 waiver to expansion.

Respectfully, we believe such a delay is unwarranted, unfair, and puts approximately 90,000 Nebraskans in jeopardy, while also forgoing much needed federal supplemental aide to facilitate this program. This directly harms Nebraska's children and families. It is our belief that any further delay of meaningful steps to implement Medicaid expansion, including the proposal of a "waiver," undermines the intent of ballot measure 427 and the public will to expand Medicaid coverage.

Proposals to implement a two-tier benefit system would create additional barriers to coverage for new and existing recipients. Tiers of this nature needlessly punish people who don't meet work and wellness requirements, preventing access to dental vision, and over the counter drug coverage. These types of coverage are essential to ensure a general state of good health and allow one to be gainfully employed. Restricting access to health coverage does not incentivize work, it restricts its possibility. In fact, the majority of Nebraskans eligible for Medicaid expansion are currently employed but are in positions which do not provide insurance.

We assert that Nebraskans, in voting approval of ballot measure 427, did not intend nor provide authorization for cuts to new and existing benefits, nor barriers to coverage. As such, it is incumbent upon the state of Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services to recommend and ensure coverage, without further delay.

In a public opinion survey of Nebraskans (July 2019) by Holland Children's Institute, an overwhelming majority of participants (70 percent) reported that affordable healthcare was most important to "[them] and [their] family." Understandably, a large majority (56 percent) of Nebraskans are also "concerned" or "very concerned" with the additional restrictions and delay on the implementation of Medicaid expansion, with only 28 percent say they are "not at

all” concerned.¹

It is clear, by vote, by intent, and in keeping with the idea that children and families are the cornerstone of Nebraska’s ‘Good Life,’ we respectfully urge the state of Nebraska and its Department of Health and Human Services to ensure the timely expansion of Medicaid, without further delay nor additional barriers to eligibility.

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About Holland Children’s Movement: Holland Children’s Movement works to ensure Nebraska children and families are prioritized in state budget and policy decisions through strategic advocacy, public engagement and effective collaboration. The Holland Children's Movement is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization. www.hollandinstitute.org. Twitter: @HollandMovement Facebook: @HollandChildrensMovement

¹ Holland Children’s Institute. *Nebraska Voters’ Outlook*. 2019. Retrieved: <https://hollandinstitute.org/fact-tank>.

