

The Public Affairs Pulse

Keeping You on Top of Legislative & Advocacy Issues

3rd Anniversary of the ACA and MI Still Fights Medicaid Expansion

Three years into Obamacare, politicians are still fighting and the public is still divided, while millions of Americans have benefitted from it. President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) into law on March 23, 2010. Since then, people under age 26 have gained access to health coverage under their parents' plans, and many preventive services are now covered by insurance with no co-pays including birth control, annual exams, Pap and STD tests.

Some of the biggest changes are still on the horizon, set to begin in 2014, like insurance exchanges, tax credits for coverage, and the expansion of the Medicaid program.

On February 7, Governor Rick Snyder released his budget proposal for the upcoming year. In it, he included the federal funds set aside to expand Medicaid, providing health insurance for thousands of Michigan men, women and children. The Michigan House of Representatives has failed to follow the Governor's recommendations and did not include Medicaid Expansion in their proposed budget.

Urge your representative to accept the funds to expand Medicaid. Accepting the federal funds set aside will provide health insurance for thousands of Michigan men, women and families.

In Michigan, nearly half a million people will be eligible for health insurance by accepting the funds to expand access to Medicaid. Hard-

working, low-income families need the security of quality health coverage to get lifesaving care when they need it. We can cover more people and save millions of taxpayer dollars that are currently spent treating uninsured people in emergency rooms.

For women, Medicaid makes the difference between access to cancer screenings and birth control or going without. The expansion will help reduce health disparities by providing low-income, uninsured women access to critical services including preventative care, family planning services, and the treatment of chronic health conditions.

Additionally, the program will be paid for with 100 percent federal dollars for the first three years, and no less than 90 percent in the years after. This brings millions of dollars to Michigan's economy. We cannot afford to turn this opportunity down.

Accepting this funding is crucial for the future health of Michigan families. Michigan legislators need to understand that expanding Medicaid is good for women, good for families, and good for Michigan.

North Dakota Signs Extreme and Unconstitutional Abortion Ban

North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple has signed the most restrictive abortion bill in the US. On March 15, the North Dakota legislature voted to approve HB 1456, banning abortion as early as six weeks if a fetal heartbeat is detectable. The bill includes exceptions to prevent death or severe health complications for women but does not include exceptions for

rape or incest.

The state currently has two separate bills pending signage by the Governor that would ban abortions for fetal abnormality or the sex of the fetus. North Dakota would become the first state to ban abortion for fetal anomaly and the fourth to ban sex selective abortion.

In response to questions about the constitutionality of the law, Governor Dalrymple replied, "Although the likelihood of this measure surviving a court challenge remains in question, this bill is nevertheless a legitimate attempt by a state legislature to discover the boundaries of Roe vs. Wade."

This extreme ban on abortion signed into law in North Dakota is a wake-up call for the country, in the midst of an unprecedented rash of bills that would severely restrict women's access to abortion. 300 bills have been introduced in 42 states that would ban or severely limit access to abortion — and, going much further, would make it harder for women to get birth control, cut women off from cancer screenings, and prohibit sex education programs that help prevent teen pregnancy.

Despite [polls showing](#) that a majority of Americans (70 percent) oppose efforts to overturn Roe v. Wade. The extraordinary number of extreme bills shows a complete disregard for women and doctors — who see the effects of these misguided policies firsthand and are speaking out against these political attacks.