

1 HB447
2 206508-3
3 By Representatives Moore (M), Lawrence, Chestnut, Rafferty,
4 Forte, Clarke, Daniels, Jones (S), Howard, Bracy, Jackson,
5 Boyd, Morris, Hollis, Drummond, Hatcher, Gray, Rogers, Hall,
6 Givan and Coleman
7 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund
8 First Read: 12-MAR-20

SYNOPSIS: This bill would expand the Medicaid program,
in light of our on-going and rural health crisis,
to provide assistance to all persons for whom
matching funds are available to the state under the
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to Medicaid; to expand the program to
provide assistance to certain state residents; to direct the
Alabama Medicaid Agency to implement the expansion; to direct
other state agencies and entities to provide certain
assistance; and to provide for appropriations for adequate
funding.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. The Legislature finds all of the
following:

1 (1) The question of how to provide comprehensive,
2 quality health care to all Alabamians regardless of income,
3 health status, age, or gender has been one the Alabama
4 Legislature has asked itself time and time again.

5 (2) The residents of this state are suffering
6 because of their lack of access to adequate health care.

7 (3) Reducing the number of uninsured patients
8 will keep hospitals open. Since 2011, 17 Alabama hospitals
9 have closed, 88 percent of these remaining rural hospitals are
10 operating in the red, and 75 percent of all Alabama hospitals
11 are operating in the red. These hospitals depend on federal
12 dollars to offset the cost of serving a high proportion
13 of low-income and uninsured patients; however, these patients
14 have suffered due to the state's failure to expand Medicaid.

15 (4) The World Health Organization has classified
16 COVID-19 as a pandemic, and a COVID-19 outbreak in the State
17 of Alabama could be devastating to the state's economy and the
18 health of all residents.

19 (5) The United States government declared the novel
20 coronavirus a public health emergency on February 4, 2020.

21 (6) Failing to expand Medicaid ensures that many
22 Alabamians that may become infected will go undiagnosed and
23 untreated: People for whom going to the doctor would result in
24 financial calamity tend not to do so before their health
25 circumstances become dire.

1 (7) Broad access to health care leads to preventive
2 care, which produces healthier families, a healthier
3 workforce, and an all around healthier state.

4 (8) The federal government started paying 100
5 percent of the Medicaid expansion in 2014 under the Patient
6 Protection and Affordable Care Act. The federal government's
7 share dropped to 95 percent in 2017, and ultimately to 90
8 percent in 2020.

9 (9) With the expansion of Medicaid, approximately
10 397,000 uninsured Alabamians would be eligible to receive
11 low-cost health insurance with a majority of these residents
12 employed. Covering low-income adults would also reduce the
13 burden of medical debt, currently the leading cause of
14 personal bankruptcy.

15 (10) Expansion of Medicaid will result in reduced
16 state spending on health care related services to those
17 previously uninsured residents with incomes below 133 percent
18 of the federal poverty level.

19 (11) In addition to enhancing access to health care,
20 expansion of Medicaid would promote revenue and economic
21 activity in this state, resulting in the preservation and
22 creation of jobs.

23 (12) Studies have shown that a one dollar
24 (\$1) increase in federal spending on Medicaid yields an
25 additional 65 to 75 cents of economic activity.

26 (13) The Alabama Health Care Improvement Task Force,
27 created on April 6, 2015, by Executive Order No. 4,

1 unanimously recommended to the Governor to close Alabama's
2 health coverage gap, which the expansion of Medicaid would
3 achieve.

4 Section 2. (a) The Medicaid program shall provide
5 assistance to all persons who apply and are determined to be
6 eligible for assistance and for whom federal matching funds
7 are available to the state under the Patient Protection and
8 Affordable Care Act, Public Law 111-148, March 23, 2010, as
9 amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act 4
10 of 2010, Public Law 111-152, March 30, 2010.

11 (b) The Alabama Medicaid Agency shall take all steps
12 necessary to implement the Medicaid expansion program as
13 provided for in subsection (a) and shall be the lead agency
14 for the implementation in this state. The Alabama Medicaid
15 Agency shall seek assistance from any state or federal
16 agencies or entities to implement the program as appropriate,
17 and all state agencies or entities shall provide assistance as
18 requested by the agency.

19 (c) The Legislature shall annually appropriate
20 adequate funding to the Alabama Medicaid Agency for the
21 purpose of implementing and operating the Medicaid expansion
22 program pursuant to this act.

23 Section 3. This act shall become effective
24 immediately following its passage and approval by the
25 Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.