

# Good News

Bringing the Light of Christ to Missouri | July/August 2020

## Understanding Medicaid Expansion

What you should know before you head to the polls in August

Missouri Governor Mike Parson has scheduled the vote on the Medicaid expansion ballot initiative, Amendment 2, for August 4th. We encourage you to review this information about the initiative and seek answers to any questions you have about Medicaid or Medicaid expansion by calling or e-mailing us. Our contact information is on the last page.

Missouri created its Medicaid program, now known as MO HealthNet, in 1967. Currently, MO HealthNet is available in Missouri for the elderly and disabled with incomes at or below 75% of the federal poverty level (FPL), pregnant women with incomes at or below 100% of the FPL, and children living in households with income at or below 300% of the FPL. MO HealthNet provides health insurance coverage for two out of every five children (including two of every five children's births), one in four persons with a disability, and one in 12 seniors.

In fiscal year 2018, 63.5% of MO HealthNet enrollees were children, 16% were Missourians with disabilities, 8.2% were seniors, and 12.3% were pregnant women and custodial parents. In the same fiscal year, 27.5% of MO HealthNet dollars were spent on children, 46% on the disabled, 16.9% on seniors, and 9.6% on pregnant women and custodial parents. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 9.4% of Missouri citizens (566,000) were uninsured in 2018. While MO HealthNet provides health insurance coverage for the elderly poor, the disabled, children and low-income pregnant women/custodial parents, low-income able-bodied adults only qualify for MO HealthNet coverage if they earn less than 22% of the federal poverty level (FPL) (\$5,764/year for a family of four).

Many low-income earners in Missouri go without health insurance coverage altogether because of the high cost of health insurance premiums, even when coverage is available through their work or on the health insurance exchange.



This puts them at risk for chronic health problems and prevents early diagnosis and treatment of disease. The Medicaid expansion ballot initiative would expand MO HealthNet, providing coverage to individuals making up to 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL) (\$34,846/year for a family of four). It is estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 additional adults and children would enroll in MO HealthNet if the program were expanded. 36 states and the District of Columbia have already expanded Medicaid since the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010. In the fall of 2018, voters in Idaho, Utah and Nebraska elected to expand Medicaid by way of a ballot initiative.

Research is showing that in most cases, Medicaid expansion improves access to care, utilization of health care services, affordability of care, and financial security among the low-income population. It also results in reductions in uncompensated care for hospitals and clinics, improving operating margins and financial performance, thereby helping these providers continue to provide care, especially in remote areas.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that "concern for the health of its citizens requires society to help in the attainment of living conditions that help citizens grow and reach maturity: food and clothing, housing, health care, basic education, employment, and social assistance." (CCC No. 2288) The Catholic Bishops of Missouri are lending their support to this effort. Will you join them?

## Statement of the Missouri Catholic Bishops on Medicaid Expansion (Amendment 2)

We wish to express our support for the current effort to expand the Missouri Medicaid (MO HealthNet) program. MO HealthNet currently provides health coverage to Missouri's most vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, the disabled, pregnant women, and children. It plays a vital role in sustaining the healthcare delivery system in our state. In our Catholic ministries throughout the state, however, we find that there are still many Missouri citizens who lack access to affordable healthcare coverage that is so necessary for human flourishing. We, therefore, support expanding the program to cover low-income workers, since doing so will help lead to better health outcomes for them and enhance their ability to continue working to support themselves and their families.

We recognize that some may not agree with expanding Medicaid by way of a constitutional amendment or in a manner that bypasses the state legislative process. We offer our support for this effort because of the unmet healthcare needs of the working poor and to ensure the continued delivery of care to those who need it most through the Missouri healthcare system, including Missouri's Catholic hospitals. We offer this support understanding that current federal law includes pro-life protections in Medicaid through the Hyde Amendment. We encourage Catholics and others of goodwill to give serious consideration to supporting this effort to expand the Missouri Medicaid program.

## What is Medicaid?

Cooperative federal and state health care coverage for: **more than 72 million beneficiaries, including low-income adults, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and the disabled.**

**Low-income adults**



**More than 28 million children**

**Pregnant women**

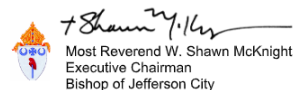
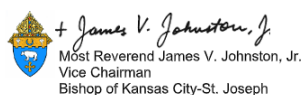
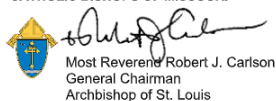


**Elderly adults**

**Disabled persons**



CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF MISSOURI

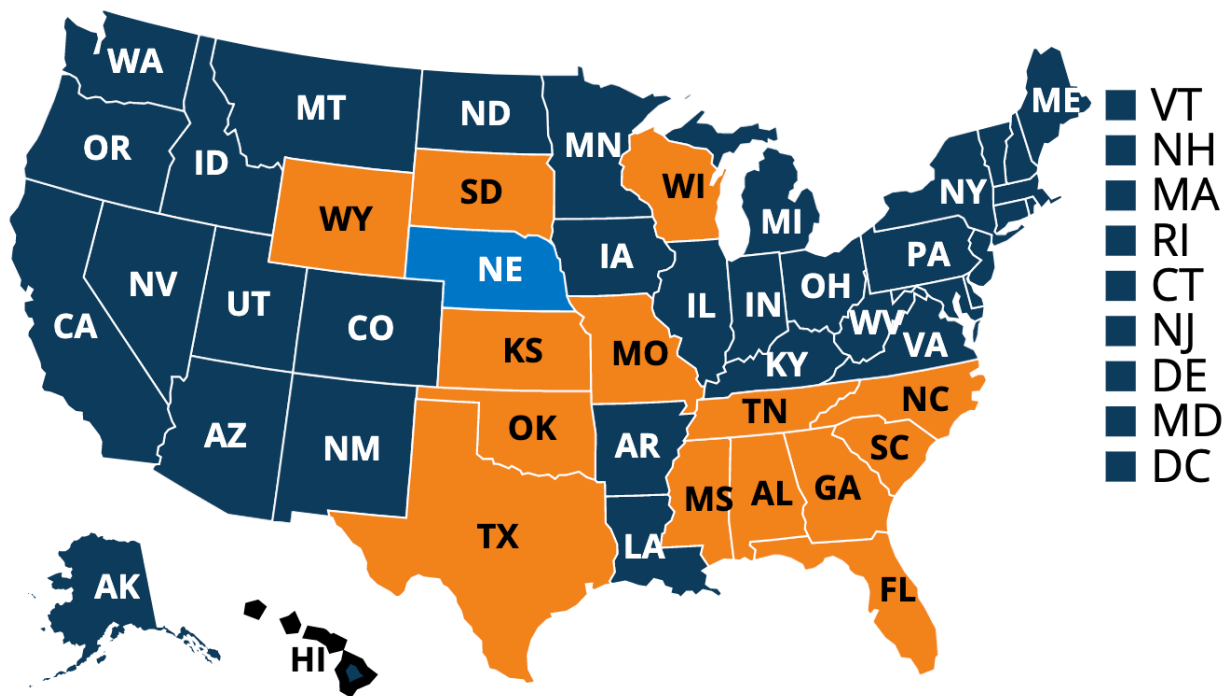


Approved October 16, 2019

info provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services | all icons designed by freepik

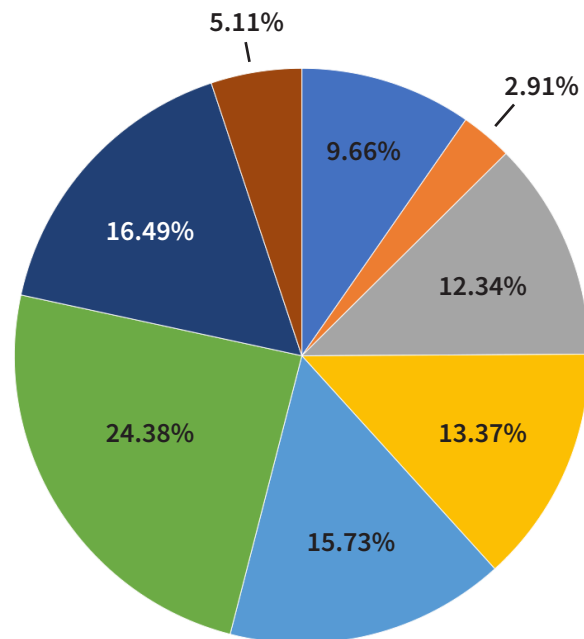
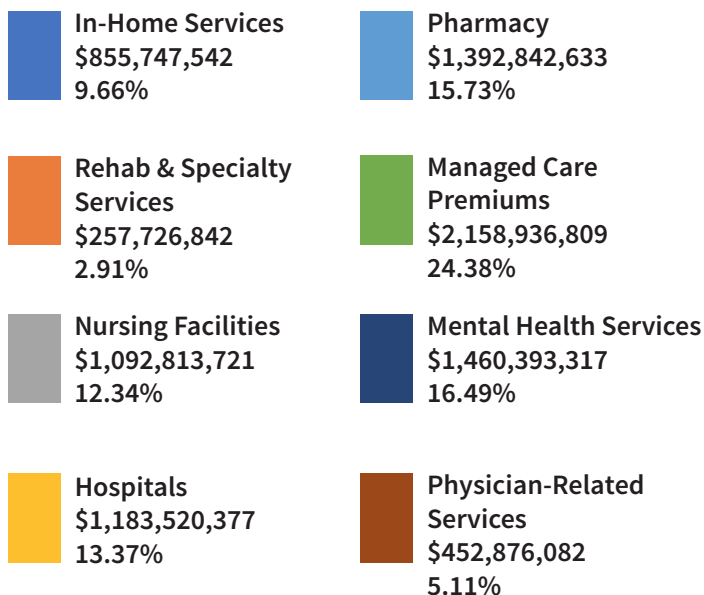
# Status of State Action on Medicaid Expansion

map provided by kff.org



## FY18 Missouri Medicaid Expenditures by Service

data provided by the MO HealthNet Division (MHD)





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## MCC from the Capitol: A podcast by the Missouri Catholic Conference



We invite you to tune into the MCC's new podcast, MCC from the Capitol. The podcast will focus on public policy issues important to Catholics across Missouri and our nation. The host, MCC Executive Director Tyler McClay, will interview guests from within the Catholic community and public policy arena who will give expert insight into policy as it relates to Catholic teaching, and vice versa. The podcast will be available through most mainstream audio streaming services and on the MCC website. The first episode, which will focus on Medicaid expansion, will be released in tandem with this *Good News*. In lieu of our Annual Assembly, we will use this platform to create virtual public policy seminars for our MOCAN members. Stay tuned for more information about this exciting new venture!



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Join the 10,000+ Catholic Missourians who make up MOCAN. If you're already a member, encourage your family, friends, and fellow parishioners to join! As MOCAN grows, so does the Catholic voice in Missouri's Capitol. Visit [mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org) or send us an email at [mocatholic@mocatholic.org](mailto:mocatholic@mocatholic.org) for details.