



Medicaid Expansion and the Hyde Amendment

"...with abiding trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, ...[w]e must make decisions based on what we currently know to be true."

- Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, January 31, 2020

Some pro-life advocates have raised a concern that expanding Missouri's Medicaid program could result in more abortions being performed in our state in the future, in the event that federal law were to change. While acknowledging this concern, the Missouri Catholic Conference is supporting the Medicaid expansion ballot initiative because current federal law prohibits Medicaid funds from being used for abortion through the Hyde Amendment.

The Hyde Amendment was first included in the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) budget bill, which funds Medicaid, in 1976. It has been included in the HHS appropriation bill each year since then, enjoying bipartisan support. Only in recent years has the Democratic Party included repeal of the Hyde Amendment as a goal in its national party platform.

Recent public polling reveals that the majority of Americans do not support public funding of abortion. A 2019 National Tracking Poll, for example, indicated more Americans oppose federal funding of abortion than those that support it by a margin of 17 percent.¹ In addition, polls conducted between 2016 and 2019 show that the average gap between those opposing public funding of abortion and those supporting it was 19 percent.² We believe public opinion on this issue would have to dramatically change for the Hyde Amendment to be repealed.

In addition to the federal prohibition on public funding for abortion, in recent years, the Missouri General Assembly has prohibited any state funds from being used for abortion procedures or going to any abortion facility. This provision has resulted in Missouri effectively defunding abortion providers like Planned Parenthood in our state.

Too many Missouri citizens, including many who are working to support themselves and their families, lack access to affordable healthcare coverage. Missouri's hospitals also depend upon Medicaid reimbursements to help their bottom line. Providing greater access to health coverage by expanding the Medicaid program will save lives, ensure better outcomes for our most vulnerable families, and is consistent with the bishops' commitment to life.

1. *National Tracking Poll #190618, Politico/Morning Consult, June 07-09, 2019*

2. *W. Saletan, "Abortion Funding Isn't as Popular as Democrats Think," Slate, June 12, 2019*