

## Statement of the Missouri Catholic Conference on Current Legislative Considerations of Medicaid Expansion

In the fall of 2019, we expressed our support for the Medicaid expansion ballot initiative, stating “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.” We reiterate our support for the expansion effort and support efforts to fund this important program in FY '22.

We acknowledge legislators must use prudential judgement in their efforts to serve the human life and dignity of all. That judgment must be applied to the decision to expand Medicaid in light of pro-life concerns that have been raised. The Hyde Amendment is a longstanding and bipartisan pro-life rider that prevents the funding of abortion in the Medicaid program. It is critical that this good law be maintained. Threats to eliminate it have been made by some politicians, including our current U.S. president and his administration.

However, focusing solely on the aspects of Medicaid related to abortion, as fundamental as that is to the moral principle of the dignity of all human life, reduces legislators’ work to a false dichotomy. Healthcare policy is complex and healthcare decisions involve many facets. A vote for or against Medicaid or Medicaid expansion should not be interpreted as a decision between being pro-life or pro-choice. We urge lawmakers to work toward legislation which protects the lives of the unborn *and* provides for the critical healthcare needs of the working poor. These two goods are not opposed.

As we stated in 2019, “there are still many Missouri citizens who lack access to affordable healthcare coverage that is so necessary for human flourishing.” We encourage the Missouri General Assembly to fund expansion of this program so the working poor and others who are eligible can access the healthcare they need and deserve. If the General Assembly chooses not to fund Medicaid expansion, we believe they have a moral obligation to provide an alternative means of providing access to healthcare for the working poor. Indeed, we are our brother’s keeper as we follow the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 25:42-45.

We pray for you our legislators as you engage the virtue of prudence in your deliberations on these important issues.

### CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF MISSOURI



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Approved April 13, 2021