

Statement

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Texans Need Real Solutions to Our Health Care Needs

(AUSTIN, Texas)—The Center for Public Policy Priorities' Associate Director Anne Dunkelberg released the following statement today regarding the Governor's announcement about Medicaid expansion and establishment of an insurance exchange as part of the Affordable Care Act.

"Expanding Medicaid is a great deal for Texas and refusing to do so is not something the Governor should decide by himself before Texans have had a full and thoughtful conversation about what's at stake for our state, and then the Legislature needs to decide on a course of action. Our state has an opportunity to help millions of Texans get the quality, affordable health care they need, and we should not pass it up.

"Under the Medicaid expansion, the federal government will pick up the vast majority of the costs of helping as many as 2 million Texans who don't have insurance get the health coverage they need. The federal government will cover 100 percent of the costs for the first three years of Texas' expansion, and no less than 90 percent every year after that. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has projected that even with a large enrollment increase in Medicaid for poor adults, our Medicaid costs would only increase by \$5.8 billion from 2014-2019, and the state would receive \$76.3 billion in federal matching funds—a net gain of \$70 billion.

"Expanding Medicaid will save Texas money in other ways, especially by reducing the money it spends providing health care in emergency rooms and health clinics to people without insurance. Texas could even end up saving more on these costs than it spends on the expansion, easing the strain on property taxes.

"Failing to expand Medicaid would squander the opportunity to pump tens of billions of dollars into our state economy and leave as many as 1.5 to 2 million of struggling Texans out in the cold without insurance coverage. The last thing Texans want is to see our federal tax dollars pay for health care for people in New York or California rather than to cover people right here at home.

"Texas should also move forward with setting up a state-based health insurance marketplace, called an exchange, that will allow millions of Texans to use tax credits to purchase quality, affordable health coverage. As recently as 2011, a broad-based group of organizations including businesses, conservatives, and advocates all agreed that a state-based insurance exchange was a good idea for Texas.

"Because one of every four Texans is uninsured, Texas has the most to gain from health care reform. Now more than ever, we need real solutions from our leaders that meet the health needs of *all* Texans."

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For More Information

For more information or to request an interview, please contact Brian Stephens at stephens@cphp.org or 512.320.0222, ext. 112.

About the Center

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