



January 8, 2019

Senate President Scott Sales
P.O. Box 11163
Bozeman, MT 59719-1163

Dear Senate President Sales:

As Chair of the Bozeman Health Board of Directors, I am writing to express Bozeman Health's strong support for Montana's Medicaid expansion (the HELP Act) and reaching a bipartisan solution to continue the program's expansion beyond its scheduled 2019 sunset. This expansion will protect critical health care coverage for almost 100,000 Montanans, including over 6,460 individuals who live in Bozeman Health's primary service area.

Bozeman Health's not-for-profit mission is "to improve community health and quality of life" for the patients, families and communities it serves. We take our mission seriously. Medicaid provides vital, and for many individuals and families, the only means to access primary, specialty, behavioral/mental health and long-term care. Studies have shown that Medicaid coverage helps avoid bankruptcy, enables beneficiaries to access needed treatment earlier, especially for conditions that if left untreated result in debilitating and lifelong chronic disease. The program also increases the ability of many individuals to be employed, among many other health and social benefits. Failure to extend Medicaid expansion could have many consequences as hospitals across the state would have to adjust for a reduced number of enrolled/served beneficiaries.

In contrast, Medicaid expansion provides an important economic engine in our service areas and across the state. The Bureau of Business and Economic Research found that Medicaid expansion has created 6,200 jobs across healthcare, retail, and construction fields; enabled a 16 percent decrease in the number of low-income Montanans who skipped needed care and an over 5 percent increase in low-income adults who achieved "excellent health" among many other benefits.

For the significant community and financial benefits of the Medicaid expansion, Bozeman Health Board of Directors strongly requests our legislative delegation and the Montana legislature to find a bipartisan path forward to protect Medicaid expansion to ensure none of our vulnerable lose health care coverage or access.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. A. B.", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Brian Brown
Chair, Board of Directors
Bozeman Health