

VOTE YES on QUESTION 2

On November 7, Maine voters will be asked whether they support expanding the state Medicaid program known as MaineCare, a federal-state partnership which provides quality healthcare to low-income individuals and families. Referendum Question 2 will appear on the November ballot in the following format:

“Do you want Maine to expand Medicaid to provide health care coverage for qualified adults under age 65 with incomes at or below 138% of the federal poverty level, which in 2017 means \$16,643 for a single person and \$22,412 for a family of two?”

Healthy Acadia strongly supports a YES vote on Question 2. If the Referendum is approved, an estimated 70,000 Maine citizens would qualify for MaineCare, and federal funding would flow into our state to support their health care needs.

As a community health coalition serving Hancock and Washington counties, Healthy Acadia works to empower people and organizations to lead healthier lives and build healthy communities by addressing critical locally-defined health challenges. We focus on a broad range of collaborative community initiatives, including Strong Beginnings, Substance Prevention and Recovery, Health Promotion and Management, Healthy Food for All, Active and Healthy Environments, and Healthy Aging. We strongly believe that access to quality, affordable health care for all is a basic human right, and that it is essential to creating healthy and vibrant communities.

Through our efforts serving individuals and families across Washington and Hancock counties, we see first-hand the devastation that the lack of affordable health insurance creates. We struggle to help people recover from opioid use disorders because they do not have health insurance and can not afford the treatment that they so urgently need and deserve. We work with families having to choose between food and medicine because they do not have insurance to cover needed medical costs. And we know what can happen when people delay needed tests and screenings or do not go to the doctor – they miss the chance to prevent or manage an illness, hurting themselves and their families. These struggles happen every day. People’s addictions deepen, their choices become more impossible, and they face greater sickness and medical costs because they cannot access health care. To date, 31 states and the District of Columbia have accepted the federal funding to expand Medicaid coverage for their low-income residents. Evidence indicates that the citizens in these states have experienced improved health care coverage, enhanced preventive and supportive health services, increased access to opioid addiction treatment services, and more robust rural hospital and health care centers.

Voting YES on Question 2 to expand MaineCare coverage is a critical step toward improving overall community health, decreasing medical costs, strengthening families, preventing chronic disease, increasing access to treatment of opioid and other substance use disorders, and preserving Maine's rural community hospitals and health centers. No one should have to choose between accessing medical care and providing food or shelter for themselves and their families. Everyone should have the support needed to recover from addiction and illness.

During these uncertain times, it is more important than ever that we stand together, in support of more affordable health care, not less.

We strongly urge Maine voters to support affordable and quality health care by voting YES on Question 2 on November 7.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elsie M. Flemings". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Elsie Flemings
Executive Director
Healthy Acadia