

1 HB183  
2 216224-2  
3 By Representatives Moore (M), Daniels, Rafferty, Gray, Boyd,  
4 Rogers, Morris, Givan, Hall, Jones (S), Bracy, Lawrence,  
5 Hassell, Drummond, Alexander, Hollis, Coleman and Howard  
6 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund  
7 First Read: 01-FEB-22

8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would expand the Medicaid program,  
9 in light of our ongoing and rural health crisis, to  
10 provide assistance to all persons for whom matching  
11 funds are available to the state under the Patient  
12 Protection and Affordable Care Act.

14 A BILL  
15 TO BE ENTITLED  
16 AN ACT

18 Relating to Medicaid; to expand the program to  
19 provide assistance to certain state residents; to direct the  
20 Alabama Medicaid Agency to implement the expansion; to direct  
21 other state agencies and entities to provide certain  
22 assistance; and to provide for appropriations for adequate  
23 funding.

24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

25 Section 1. The Legislature finds all of the  
26 following:

1           (1) The question of how to provide comprehensive,  
2           quality health care to all Alabamians regardless of income,  
3           health status, age, or gender has been one the Alabama  
4           Legislature has asked itself time and time again.

5           (2) The residents of this state are suffering  
6           because of their lack of access to adequate health care.

7           (3) The COVID-19 pandemic in the State of Alabama  
8           has been devastating to the state's economy and to the health  
9           of all residents.

10          (4) As of December 31, 2021, the State of Alabama  
11          has seen at least 850,000 cases of COVID-19 and has faced over  
12          16,000 deaths related to COVID-19 since the outbreak almost  
13          two years ago.

14          (5) The residents of Alabama have been hit hard, and  
15          it is imperative that access to health care is expanded to  
16          ensure the act of visiting a doctor does not result in  
17          financial calamity for individuals or families.

18          (6) Reducing the number of uninsured patients  
19          will keep hospitals open. Since 2011, 17 Alabama hospitals  
20          have closed, 88 percent of these remaining rural hospitals are  
21          operating in the red, as well as 75 percent of all Alabama  
22          hospitals. These hospitals depend on federal dollars to offset  
23          the cost of serving a high proportion of low-income and  
24          uninsured patients; however, these patients have suffered due  
25          to the state's failure to expand Medicaid.

1           (7) Broad access to health care leads to preventive  
2 care, which produces healthier families, a healthier  
3 workforce, and an all-around healthier state.

4           (8) With the expansion of Medicaid, approximately  
5 397,000 uninsured Alabamians would be eligible to receive  
6 low-cost health insurance with a majority of these residents  
7 being employed. Covering low-income adults would also reduce  
8 the burden of medical debt, currently the leading cause of  
9 personal bankruptcy.

10          (9) Expansion of Medicaid will result in reduced  
11 state spending on health care related services to those  
12 previously uninsured residents with incomes below 133 percent  
13 of the federal poverty level.

14          (10) Expansion of Medicaid will also increase  
15 coverage and access to health care for our veteran population  
16 to support and supplement the cost for their medical and  
17 mental health needs.

18          (11) In addition to enhancing access to health care,  
19 expansion of Medicaid would promote revenue and economic  
20 activity in this state, resulting in the preservation and  
21 creation of jobs.

22          (12) Studies have shown that a one dollar  
23 (\$1) increase in federal spending on Medicaid yields an  
24 additional 65 to 75 cents of economic activity.

25          (13) The Alabama Health Care Improvement Task Force,  
26 created on April 6, 2015, by Executive Order No. 4,  
27 unanimously recommended to the Governor to close Alabama's

1 health coverage gap, which the expansion of Medicaid would  
2 achieve.

3 Section 2. (a) The Medicaid program shall provide  
4 assistance to all persons who apply for and are determined to  
5 be eligible for assistance and for whom federal matching funds  
6 are available to the state under the Patient Protection and  
7 Affordable Care Act, Public Law 111-148, March 23, 2010, as  
8 amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act 4  
9 of 2010, Public Law 111-152, March 30, 2010.

10 (b) The Alabama Medicaid Agency shall take all steps  
11 necessary to implement the Medicaid expansion program as  
12 provided for in subsection (a) and shall be the lead agency  
13 for the implementation in this state. The Alabama Medicaid  
14 Agency shall seek assistance from any state or federal  
15 agencies or entities to implement the program as appropriate,  
16 and all state agencies and entities shall provide assistance  
17 as requested by the agency.

18 (c) The Legislature shall annually appropriate  
19 adequate funding to the Alabama Medicaid Agency for the  
20 purpose of implementing and operating the Medicaid expansion  
21 program pursuant to this act.

22 Section 3. This act shall become effective  
23 immediately following its passage and approval by the  
24 Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.