

February 22, 2019

Representative Fred Wood
Chair, House Health & Welfare Committee
Idaho State Capitol
Boise, Idaho 83702

Re: Thank you

Dear Chairman Wood,

Thank you for defending the will of Idaho voters by voting against the Medicaid expansion repeal proposed by Representative Green. Medicaid and Medicaid expansion are very important for lung disease patients. The American Lung Association in Idaho appreciates your vote that upheld the will of Idaho voters and protected lung disease patients as well as the dedication you have shown to improving the health of citizens across the state during your years in office.

Medicaid expansion helps lung disease patients access the comprehensive healthcare coverage that they need to breathe. For example, for patients with asthma, coverage means access to prescription drugs and visits with their doctor, both necessary to stay healthy and avoid a costly visit to the emergency department. Access to preventive services also ensures people have access to services like tobacco cessation support and lung cancer screening at no cost.

The evidence is clear that Medicaid expansion has important health benefits for lung disease patients. For example, one study found an association between Medicaid expansion and early stage cancer diagnosis.ⁱ Lung cancer five-year survival is only 5 percent for those diagnosed at a late stage after the tumor has spread, but increases to 56 percent for those diagnosed at an early stage before the tumor has spread.ⁱⁱ For patients with asthma, another study found that Medicaid expansion was associated with improvements in quality measures related to asthma management at federally qualified health centers, helping patients to breathe easier.ⁱⁱⁱ

Medicaid expansion will also improve the financial well-being of Idaho residents. Medicaid expansion has helped state economies and has been associated with a reduced risk of hospital closures, especially in rural areas.^{iv}

The American Lung Association in Idaho thanks you for supporting the will of Idaho voters by implementing Medicaid expansion, and we urge you to implement this law without adding costs, red tape, or delays.

Thank you for all you do,



Heather Kimmel
Director of Health Promotions
Boise, Idaho

ⁱ Aparna Soni, Kosali Simon, John Cawley, Lindsay Sabik, “Effect of Medicaid Expansions of 2014 on Overall and Early-Stage Cancer Diagnoses”, American Journal of Public Health 108, no. 2 (February 1, 2018): pp. 216-218. Available at <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304166>.

ⁱⁱ [SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2015](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Megan B. Cole, Omar Galárraga, Ira B. Wilson, Brad Wright, and Amal N. Trivedi. “At Federally Funded Health Centers, Medicaid Expansion Was Associated With Improved Quality Of Care,” Health Affairs 36, no. 1 (January 2017): pp. 40-48. Available at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/pdf/10.1377/hlthaff.2016.0804>.

^{iv} Richard Lindrooth, Marcelo Perrailon, Rose Hardy, and Gregory Tung, “Understanding the Relationship Between Medicaid Expansions and Hospital Closures,” Health Affairs 27, no. 1 (January 2018): pp. 111-120. Available at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.0976>.