

Issue Brief

Expanded Medicaid Coverage



What's the issue

- Beginning in January 2014, under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), states were optionally allowed to expand those who are eligible to receive Medicaid coverage to include low income, non-elderly and non-disabled adults without dependent children, with incomes up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.
- For example, in 2016 a single person could have an income up to \$16,394 to be eligible for coverage under an expanded Medicaid program.
- Illinois opted to participate in 2013, but included language in the legislation that triggers the elimination of the expanded coverage if the federal matching rate falls below 90 percent.

Why does it matter?

- As of 2016, more than 637,000 individuals in Illinois, or 20 percent of the 3.2 million total Medicaid recipients in the state, had gained access to coverage under the ACA.
- One of every four people in the Illinois has health insurance through Medicaid.
- Children make up 50 percent of the state's Medicaid population.
- Presence Health's charity care, or financial assistance provided to patients having difficulty meeting their financial obligations, decreased for the first time in 2015 as a result of increased access to health care coverage.

What is the Presence Health perspective?

- **Presence Health fundamentally believes in access to health care.** Ensuring access to health care is a fundamental belief of our ministry. Any changes to the ACA should maintain coverage gains that have provided many people in Illinois with the coverage they need to proactively seek care. We do not believe the nearly 650,000 Illinoisans should lose their access to coverage gained through the ACA.
- **Medicaid supports our mission.** Health care coverage is essential for poor and vulnerable communities. The founding religious sisters who established our ministries went out into the communities to care for those who would otherwise not receive care. Receiving funds from Medicaid allows Presence Health to continue fulfilling its mission.