Medicaid Expansion in Tennessee

Tennessee is one of 14 states that has not expanded Medicaid. By doing so, we are turning down 1.4 billion dollars of government funding annually (our tax dollars), failing to provide medical insurance to 300,000 Tennesseans, and turning our backs on 15,000 high paying jobs. The Medicaid expansion would provide medical insurance to Tennesseans who make less than 138% of the federal poverty level ($34,635 for a family of 4). Folks at these income levels that do not receive their insurance through their employer cannot afford health insurance because the average cost in 2018 for a family health insurance plan is $1168 dollars/month per eHealth. 90% of the Medicaid expansion would be paid for by the federal government. Expanding Medicaid would also help keep rural hospitals open: Tennessee has seen 13 rural hospitals close since 2012 and many others are struggling. Tennessee needs to expand Medicaid and it needs to be done now.

A recent poll found that 63% of Tennesseans favor expansion of Medicaid in Tennessee. The chief opposition to expansion of Medicaid in Tennessee is the group Americans for Prosperity which is funded by the Koch brothers who successfully stopped governor Haslem’s attempts to expand Medicaid in Tennessee during his tenure. Americans for Prosperity believe having health insurance is a privilege and should only be available to those who can afford it. Governor Lee has vowed to oppose Medicaid expansion and seems to be in the Americas for Prosperity camp. I think we need to change his mind. He is touting a Tennessee Serves initiative but denying 300,000 Tennesseans access to medical insurance and closing rural hospitals is in no way serving those in need in Tennessee. Join me in letting Governor Lee know you support Medicaid expansion in Tennessee. Also, ask him to set up the legal framework in Tennessee to allow for a ballot initiative which was used to pass Medicaid expansion in the deep red states of Idaho, Utah, and Nebraska during the last election. You can contact governor Lee via email using this link <https://www.tn.gov/governor/contact-us.html>.

R. Jason Goodman