



# FLORIDA DECIDES HEALTHCARE

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## Medicaid Expansion in South Dakota Highlights Opportunity for Success in Florida's Increasingly Conservative Political Climate

**Tallahassee, FL-** Following a victory at the ballot box for Medicaid expansion in South Dakota, health advocates in Florida see an opportunity to close the health coverage gap in Florida.

After a successful ballot initiative, South Dakota has joined a growing list of red states to have expanded Medicaid through the ballot box. Due to the success of Medicaid expansion campaigns in Utah, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Idaho, Missouri, and now South Dakota, Florida Decides Healthcare (the political committee sponsoring the initiative for Medicaid expansion in Florida) sees this as proof of potential success for its Medicaid expansion campaign in the Sunshine State.

“What we just witnessed in South Dakota is further proof that closing the health coverage gap is a bipartisan priority, and that Medicaid expansion is a critical component of addressing this issue. While the prevailing election story coming out of Florida is of its solidification as a red-state, the results in South Dakota make it clear that the political tendencies of any state do not eliminate the bipartisan appeal of Medicaid expansion. Floridians are in dire need of healthcare access, and South Dakota’s successful initiative has provided us with even more proof that Medicaid expansion is something that Floridians will get behind, regardless of how they vote on the rest of their ballot.” said Jake Flaherty, Campaign Manager for Florida Decides Healthcare.

“Florida has the third most people without health insurance out of all the states. By expanding Medicaid, we would reduce the number by over a third and then continue to increase access to affordable and quality care throughout the state.” said Scott Darius, Executive Director at Florida Voices for Health.

“Medicaid expansion has continued to see growth in bipartisan appeal not only because of the current healthcare crisis, but also because it is fiscally beneficial for states to enact it. Most of the money that Florida would spend to expand Medicaid has already been sent to Washington in the form of our federal tax dollars. After federal matching funds, cost savings and tax revenue associated with expansion, Florida would see a net savings of \$1.95 billion in our state budget in the first year.” said Holly Bullard, Chief Strategy and Development Officer for Florida Policy Institute.

“The public health and fiscal benefits that motivated the people of South Dakota to expand Medicaid, are available to us here in Florida. With 12.7% of Floridians uninsured compared to South Dakota’s 5.1%, these benefits will have an even greater positive impact here in Florida.” noted Scott Darius.

Florida is now one of just two remaining states where Medicaid expansion is possible through a ballot initiative under the state constitution, placing the Sunshine State front and center for those seeking to improve access to affordable and quality healthcare across the country.

Florida Decides Healthcare seeks to follow this victory in South Dakota up with a successful ballot initiative for Medicaid Expansion in Florida. More information about the campaign can be found at [floridadecideshealthcare.org](http://floridadecideshealthcare.org).