

## Republicans' heartless Medicaid expansion delay

*Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 07.27.23*

On March 27, 2023, [Governor Roy Cooper](#) signed House Bill 76, Access to Healthcare Options, making North Carolina the 40<sup>th</sup> state to expand Medicaid. This move could provide much-needed coverage to over 600,000 North Carolina residents while bringing in several billion dollars of federal funds. Governor Cooper [remarked that](#), "Medicaid expansion is a once-in-a-generation investment that will strengthen our mental health system, boost our rural hospitals, support working families."

Medicaid expansion was mandated under the [Affordable Care Act \(ACA\)](#) to extend Medicaid coverage to nearly all American adults with incomes at or below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level, which was \$20,120 per individual for 2023. To achieve this, states would be provided with federal matching funds for their additional covered populations.

For folks who qualified, this was fantastic news, but our MAGA Republican legislators would rather let these low-income North Carolinians go without critical health care than accept federal funds, even if expanding Medicaid might actually make America "great" again. They've shamelessly handcuffed our Medicaid expansion to their budget process, and seem intent on holding it hostage as long as possible.

North Carolina's [new fiscal year](#) began on July 1. Without a new budget, North Carolina's Medicaid expansion remains stymied, and the hopes of the needy are once again crushed. According to [Fox News](#), "ongoing negotiations" and vacation plans and national conferences are to blame for the delays, and a budget vote isn't expected until August.

No worries, though. It's not as though North Carolina's Medicaid expansion is a matter of life or death... for our legislators. Those in need will just have to defer vital care until our MAGA Republican hostage-takers finally relent and pass a budget. Until then, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness will remain on hold.

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