



## **Medicaid Expansion and Reform: Impact on the Mat-Su**

### **The Mat-Su Health Foundation Board supports:**

- Using Medicaid expansion dollars as a catalyst to reform Medicaid to control costs and make the program more sustainable.
- Designing Alaska's Medicaid expansion as a path to self-sufficiency for individuals to ensure they enter or remain in the workforce.
- Building an "opt out" provision into State statute if the federal government reneges on its obligations.
- Expanding Medicaid to cover more Mat-Su residents so they can access care in more cost-effective ways to lead more productive lives.

### **The Mat-Su economy will benefit greatly from Medicaid expansion:**

- Medicaid expansion will bring \$20 million in new federal revenue annually to Mat-Su.
- Medicaid expansion will lead to 72 new jobs and \$1.3 million more in wages and salaries.

### **The health insurance coverage gap affects Mat-Su disproportionately:**

- 20% Mat-Su residents do not have health insurance, as compared to 15% of Anchorage residents and 17% of people statewide.

### **Mat-Su residents are more likely to be uninsured if they:**

- Are white;
- Under the age of 45;
- Have a low income;
- Have not gone to college; and,
- Live in a rural part of the Borough.

### **Of Mat-Su residents eligible under expanded Medicaid:**

- About 2000 Mat-Su residents are employed
- About 1000 Mat-Su residents are "not in the workforce," meaning they may be in school, raising a family, or retired
- Approximately 250 Mat-Su residents are unable to work
- Around 1,400 Mat-Su residents are in the labor force looking for work or seasonally employed

### **As many as 4,800 Mat-Su residents will be eligible for basic health care coverage if Medicaid is expanded:**

- About 1,400 are between the ages of 55 and 64.
- About 1,100 age 45-54.
- About 500 age 35-44.
- About 1,500 age 19-34.

### **Both men and women fall in the coverage gap:**

- 54% are men.

- 46% are women.

### **Faces of the Uninsured in Mat-Su:**

John Doe: He is one of our neighbors who works several part-time jobs, none of which offer health insurance. His wages are less than 138% of the Federal Poverty Level, so he does not qualify for a subsidy to purchase insurance at healthcare.gov but is still legally required to have it or pay the penalty.

Jane Smith: She is a senior citizen who is not yet old enough to qualify for Medicare and Social Security benefits. She works at Mat-Su Senior Services, which does not provide health insurance. Like John, her wages are too low to get help buying an affordable plan in the insurance marketplace.

Jill Jones: She is a Mat-Su College student who has a part time job who is eligible to be on her parents' health insurance until age 26 – except that her parents have a small family construction business and they don't have insurance either.

Dave Green: He has worked in construction for 20 years, mostly for small firms. Last year, he fell off a roof and became critically injured. He didn't qualify for charity care at Mat-Su Regional because his income was too high the previous year. Now, he's try to get strong again so that he can work to pay back his hospital bill. With no current income, he does not qualify for a subsidy and cannot purchase insurance on the exchange.

All of these individuals will face a penalty for not having health insurance, yet none can afford to buy it. When they have a health crisis, they will either leave it untreated, or, when it gets bad enough, visit an emergency room. There, the cost of treatment will be much higher than it would have been if problems could have been addressed before they reached the crisis stage.

### **These stories can change with Medicaid expansion and reform.**

- 4,800 Mat-Su residents will be eligible for basic health care coverage if Medicaid is expanded (40,000 statewide).

*Sources: Mat-Su estimates for employment, age, and gender of potential new Medicaid enrollees were created using statewide data from the Evergreen Economic and the Department of Health and Social Services Healthy Alaska Plan and House Finance Budget Subcommittee FY2016 Division Overview report applied to the Mat-Su population. Data about how many Mat-Su residents have insurance and the characteristics of the uninsured if from the Behavioral Health Surveillance System State of Alaska, Division of Public Health.*