

Resolution in support of Medicaid Expansion
Adopted by the Board of Trustees of
Shodair Children's Hospital
November 15, 2023

WHEREAS, Shodair Children's Hospital exists to heal, help, and inspire hope for children across Montana facing behavioral health challenges and for Montanans needing medical genetic services;

WHEREAS, Medicaid is a critical source of healthcare coverage for rural Montanans, with two-thirds of Montana Medicaid enrollees living in rural areas;

WHEREAS, Shodair services for the past few years have reached 52 of Montana's 56 counties, 99% of Shodair patients are Montana residents, and an average of 75% of Shodair patients are covered through Medicaid;

WHEREAS, Montana is experiencing a behavioral health crisis, and Montana's current expansion of Medicaid provides a stable payment source for behavioral health services; this both enables patients to receive the care they need and ensures that healthcare providers are compensated for the care they provide, stabilizing Montana's behavioral healthcare system and preserving and protecting access to behavioral health services at time when Montanans need them most;

WHEREAS, the stabilizing impacts of Medicaid expansion in Montana allowed Shodair to further expand behavioral health services, including: 1) expanding acute services by 50% to thirty beds to address a critical waiting list issue; 2) establishing day treatment programs for elementary students and new school-based services for both elementary and secondary students; and 3) establishing in-person clinics in key Montana markets and telemedicine services in remote areas.

WHEREAS, the expansion of Medicaid has increased access to care and improved health outcomes for parents and improved the financial security of the family, which studies have

shown strengthens the parent-child relationship and can help prevent or mitigate the negative effects of trauma, poverty, or other adverse childhood experiences;

WHEREAS, a high rate of uninsured residents is linked to an increase in the severity of patient conditions, poorer outcomes, and higher costs as a result of delayed care and seeking emergency care for conditions that could have been avoided or managed through preventative care such as outpatient services;

WHEREAS, the expansion of Medicaid in Montana has provided healthcare coverage to low-income Montanans who otherwise have few other options for healthcare coverage, helping to reduce the rate of uninsured Montanans by 45% since Medicaid expansion was implemented;

WHEREAS, Montana has the 13th lowest rate of state general fund spending on Medicaid nationally and a lower rate of spending than peer states (CO, ND, SD, WA, WY), including states that have not expanded Medicaid (SD, WY);

WHEREAS, our patients receive care not only from us but also from several other Montana hospitals, independent physicians and health clinics that have made great progress integrating behavioral health services into existing service settings such as primary care, and the ability of these providers to remain financially viable and continue to provide care to all patients may be negatively impacted by significant changes to or the sunset of Medicaid expansion in Montana;

WHEREAS, Medicaid expansion has significantly grown Montana's economy according to a 2023 study conducted by ABMJ Consulting, which reported that Medicaid expansion helped create and sustain over 7,500 new jobs across multiple industries, and generated an estimated \$475 million in new personal income and \$775 million in economic activity in 2022.

WHEREAS, Shodair Children's Hospital is currently facing unprecedented financial pressures resulting primarily from a shortage of healthcare workers that limits the number of patients we can safely admit, and the loss of Medicaid expansion would only worsen our financial capacity to recruit and retain staff, keep beds open and steward Montana's only psychiatric children's hospital into the future

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Shodair Children's Hospital endorses Montana's current Medicaid expansion program, supports repealing the sunset of the program, and further recognizes our patients, caregivers, and the citizens of Montana have a compelling interest in ensuring our hospital remains financially viable;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Shodair Children's Hospital strongly requests the Montana Legislature repeal the sunset of the Medicaid Reform and Integrity Act passed in 2019 and protect healthcare coverage for low-income Montanans and the \$775 million economic engine it has created; and

APPROVED ON THIS DAY, November 15, 2023, BY THE GOVERNING BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF Shodair Children's Hospital.



Sandra Smith, Hospital Board President

Board Members:

Galen Hollenbaugh, Hospital Board Vice President
Joseph Shevlin, Hospital Board Secretary
Steven Johnson, Hospital Board Treasurer
Joel Maes, DDS, Foundation Board President
John Nordwick, Foundation Board Treasurer/Secretary
Edward Surbrugg, PhD, Board Member
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