

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF MEDICAID EXPANSION  
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
BENEFIS HEALTH SYSTEM  
May 28 ,2024

WHEREAS, Benefis Missouri River Medical Center exists to improve the health of the patients and communities we serve;

WHEREAS, a significant body of research, studies and reports indicate that having health coverage is key to improving the health status of a community;

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 condition that could have been avoided or managed through preventative care;

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% and by an average of 11 percentage points per county across our 14-county northcentral Montana service area since Medicaid expansion was implemented;

WHEREAS, Montana is experiencing a behavioral health crisis, and Montana's expansion of Medicaid provides a stable payment source for behavioral health services including \$54 Million in new funds for substance abuse disorder prevention and medication-assisted treatment to address the states opioid epidemic;

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

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 a 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. In our service area, Medicaid expansion has supported 1,533 jobs, \$92,276,000 in personal income and \$229,291,000 in local economic activity;

WHEREAS, Benefis Missouri River Medical Center has remained financially viable due in large part to a 76.7% reduction in bad debt levels since Medicaid expansion took effect;

WHEREAS, Benefis Missouri River Medical Center is currently facing unprecedented financial pressures resulting from a 19.4% increase in expenses from 2020-2022 (driven by post

pandemic forces including a shortage of healthcare workers and reliance on temporary contractors, increased prices for drugs and other supplies) paired with a 3.8% revenue increase in 2022 compared to the prior year;

WHEREAS, the payments received for caring for Medicaid patients represents 28.2% of Benefis Health System revenues, which support the financial stability of our organization for all who depend on us for care;

WHEREAS, residents from our service area receive care not only from us but several other Montana hospitals, independent physicians and health services, 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;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Benefis Missouri River Medical Center endorses Montana's current Medicaid expansion program, supports repealing the sunset of the program, and further recognizes our patients, caregivers, and the citizens of northcentral Montana have a compelling interest in ensuring our hospital remains financially viable and an economic engine for our surrounding area;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Benefis Missouri River Medical Center strongly requests our legislative delegation and the Montana Legislature to 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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Benefis Missouri River Medical Center will inform members of our community and local legislators on the impacts to local healthcare services should the legislature not renew the program.

APPROVED ON THIS DAY, May 28, 2023, BY THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF Benefis Missouri River Medical Center.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman of board BMRMC