



RESOLUTION
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
GREAT FALLS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WHEREAS, increased access to reliable healthcare is a cornerstone of a viable workforce;

WHEREAS, Montana is a small business state and expanded Medicaid has provided small business employees access to affordable healthcare coverage for nearly 10 years;

WHEREAS, the HELP Act has improved health outcomes, increased the financial health of our residents, and created a healthier workforce; and

WHEREAS, from October 2022 to October 2023 in Cascade County 8,253 adults ages 19-64 were covered by expanded Medicaid; this is approximately 9.7% of the county population; and

WHEREAS, during that same year, expanded Medicaid supported preventative health care services for 5,683 people in Cascade County; mental health services for 3,343 people in Cascade County; and substance use disorder treatment for 683 people in Cascade County; and

WHEREAS, a University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research study in 2023 found that compared to an economy without expanded Medicaid, the Cascade County economy today has:

- An additional 293 year-round, permanent jobs;
- A gain of \$21.1 million in annual income received by households each year;
- Increased annual gross receipts of \$49.9 million for Cascade County business and non-business organizations; and
- A population that is higher by 414 people; and

WHEREAS, of the 293 permanent new jobs created in Cascade County, 27 are in retail trade, 25 are in accommodation and food service, 18 are in construction, 134 are in healthcare and social assistance and 70 are in other industries; and

WHEREAS, the HELP Act has significantly stimulated Montana's economy according to the Montana Healthcare Foundation which reported that the HELP Act has created and sustained over 7,500 new jobs, generated an estimated \$475 million in new personal income, and fueled \$775 million in additional economic activity to Montana's economy in 2022; and

WHEREAS, employers benefit from Montana Medicaid by having healthier employees, and through the cost avoidance of not paying for private health insurance, by avoiding tax penalties; and

WHEREAS, creating and sustaining a healthy workforce is key to addressing our state's workforce shortage, by ensuring that the working-age adults in our state remain able to work; and



NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Directors of the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce endorses the HELP Act and supports repealing the sunset of the Act and further recognizes our local businesses and the citizens of Cascade County have a compelling interest in ensuring access to health care for a healthier workforce and reduced health care costs borne by our local businesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce strongly requests our legislative delegation and the Montana Legislature protect health care coverage for the almost 10% of Cascade County residents by removing the sunset on expanded Medicaid.

APPROVED ON THIS 24 DAY OF april, 2024 BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GREAT FALLS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Lynda Morin
Chamber Board Chair