

# GRASSROOTS in NEBRASKA

*Nebraska State Senators are considering expanding the state's Medicaid program, which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled is **OPTIONAL**. The Court warned: Federal money comes with strings, so State officials must **choose** to accept or **REJECT** them.*

Nebraska 103rd Unicameral, LB577

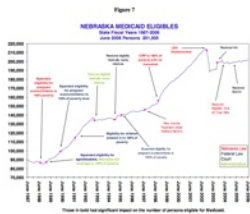
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## Nebraska's Current Medicaid program is the 2nd Most Generous in the Nation

**Massachusetts is number one.** Almost 70% of the money spent for Medicaid in Nebraska each year is expended to pay for **optional services** and/or **optional populations** the Unicameral has voted to provide over and above what's required under the federal Medicaid law.

By expanding this already lavish program, Legislators are committing the state to continue them, **regardless of ability to pay:** *Read more at:*

<http://grassrootsne.com/?p=24130>



## Expanding Medicaid Would HARM \*Not\* Help Nebraska Families

Research indicates marriage is the most effective poverty-fighting tool, and in NE, marriage reduces the probability of poverty by 86%.

Medicaid is a program which *incentivizes* the dissolution of families, disincentivizes work, and, perpetuates poverty. See <http://grassrootsne.com/?p=24543> and see "Medicaid patients..." section, below

**Low income families aren't the only families which stand to be hurt.** (See box to right and "LB577..." )

## Likely impacts of Medicaid Expansion and Full implementation of Health Care Law:

- Increased Medicaid spending seems to ensure increased taxation, considering long-term projections
- Rising health care costs and insurance premiums as insured pick up more of under-funded tab
- Potential loss of employer-provided insurance as costs increase
- Decreased work hours or job loss to avoid the employer-mandates

*Also see "LB577..." , below*

## LB577: Nebraska's Unaffordable Care Act

### Proponents of Medicaid Expansion Are Trying to Argue That Doing So Will Save the State Money. That's Obviously False.

Expanding Medicaid to cover more uninsured people will not reduce costs through fewer emergency room visits for non-emergency care, because the most common users of emergency rooms are public health insurance (Medicaid and Medicare) recipients living in rural areas.

Nebraska's statistical profile of a "typical" Medicaid patient is weighted more heavily towards usage of emergency rooms for non-emergency care.

There is already a scarcity of doctors in Nebraska and a decreasing number willing to accept Medicaid.

Medicaid recipients have no financial incentive to avoid use of the emergency room since they don't share in the increased expenses.

Low reimbursement rates for Medicaid patients shift costs to people who are privately insured, increasing their premiums and co-pays, and raising deductibles.

*Read more:* <http://grassrootsne.com/?p=24769>

### Medicaid Patients Often Receive VERY POOR Health Care

Studies show Medicaid patients, as compared to privately insured...

- More likely to have complications following surgery, longer hospital stays
- Have lower cancer survival rates

The most comprehensive study found Medicaid patients **TWICE as likely to die** after surgery than privately insured patients. Read more: [http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/05/medicaid-provides-poor-quality-care-what-the-research-shows#\\_ftnref7](http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/05/medicaid-provides-poor-quality-care-what-the-research-shows#_ftnref7)

### Federal Funds Are NOT "Free Money"

Senators like Bob Krist (District 10) apparently believe in something like a "Federal Money Fairy".



Where does the Federal government get its money?

- Taxes paid by individuals - including

NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS

- Borrowing / obligating *FUTURE* TAXPAYERS

In a typical year, Nebraska receives more in federal tax dollars than Nebraskans pay in federal taxes. Nearly 40% of the State's budget is comprised of federal funds.

Is Nebraska entitled to suck up even more Federal dollars? Are the other states supposed to pay for our lavish programs?

*Read more:* <http://grassrootsne.com/?p=24486>

**SUPREME COURT HEALTH CARE RULING OVERTURNED REQUIREMENT TO EXPAND MEDICAID AND WARNED:**

*“Congress has no authority to order the States to regulate according to its instructions. Congress may offer the States grants and require the States to comply with accompanying conditions, but the States must have a genuine choice whether to accept the offer.” (p. 58)*

*“Permitting the Federal Government to force the States to implement a federal program would threaten the political accountability key to our federal system.” (p. 48)*

*“What Congress is not free to do is to penalize States that choose not to participate in that new program...” (p. 55)*

*“There is no doubt that the Act dramatically increases state obligations under Medicaid.” (p. 45)*

*“Under the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid is transformed...It is no longer a program to care for the neediest among us, but rather an element of a comprehensive national plan to provide universal health insurance coverage.” (p. 54)*

*“Some States may indeed decline to participate, either because they are unsure they will be able to afford their share of the new funding obligations, or because they are unwilling to commit the administrative resources necessary to support the expansion.” (pp. 57-8)*

The Supreme Court cases affecting the health care law are commonly referred to as *NFIB v Sebelius*. The opinions can be read in full here:

<http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/>

**YOUR SENATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION:**

If you don't know your Senator's contact information, visit their page at [NebraskaLegislature.gov](http://NebraskaLegislature.gov) (Look for "Senators" in left side-bar). If you don't know you who your State Senator is, visit this page: [http://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator\\_find.php](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_find.php)

**LB577 Hearing Was Held by Heath and Human Services Committee on February 28, 2013**

Status: It is difficult to predict a timetable after a hearing, due to the significant of discretion of Nebraska's Legislative Committees - they vote on bills when they choose.

We recommend making contact with members of the Committee as soon as possible, and with your own State Senator, within the next two weeks. We're going to our best to track status, so you're welcome to check our website: <http://grassrootsne.com>

**Health and Human Services Committee Membership**

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**WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT LB577?**

Based on past history at the Unicameral, unfortunately, our State Senators (including most of the Republicans) are likely to approve LB577, and vote to expand the State's Medicaid program, **UNLESS enough Nebraskans cause them to change their minds.**

**Here's what you can do, if you...**

*Have only a little time available...*

**Contact YOUR State Senator (if you need information about them, see the box, lower left).**

- Be sure to list your name, and at least your zip code, so that it's clear you are a constituent
- "I DO NOT TO SUPPORT LB577"
- If you have the time, list three reasons, in your own words, for your opposition

*If you have a little more time...*

**Hand out copies of this flyer and/or talk to people about contacting their own Senator**

*And, if you have a little more time...*

**Ask your Senator some questions before telling them where you stand.**

Using this method could tell you a lot about the quality of the person who represents you. (Unless you can visit with your Senator in person, you might have to wait for a reply via email or return call).

- Do you support or oppose the expansion of Nebraska's Medicaid program (LB577)?
- If you support it, what information has convinced you that it is a good idea?
- From where do / did you obtain your information?
- If you oppose it, do you have any intention of influencing any of your fellow Senators on this issue?
- If yes, what are your plans?
- If no, why not?

Finally, if you have the time and are willing to share the results of any contacts you make, we'd really appreciate hearing about it. Please use the email contact form on this webpage: [http://grassrootsne.com/?page\\_id=2214](http://grassrootsne.com/?page_id=2214)