



NEWS

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Idaho's Local Health Districts Unite in Support of Health Insurance Coverage for Low-Income Idahoans

COEUR D'ALENE, ID - Idaho's seven local health districts passed a resolution during their annual statewide meeting Thursday, June 9 2016, supporting health insurance coverage for Idaho's low-income population, often called the "gap population." Under Resolution 16-01, Idaho's local health districts declared support of providing health insurance coverage to individuals and families whose incomes are between zero and 100 percent of the federal poverty level to ensure access to health care with the most cost-effective healthcare service delivery system. It is estimated that 78,000 low-income Idahoans do not have health insurance coverage.

"Regardless of household income, we all face illness or medical emergencies at some point in our lives and need access to health care. As a father and a grandfather, I think this expansion is an important step to take for Idaho families," said Bonner County Commissioner, Glen Bailey, who represents the Panhandle Health District and serves as president of the IADBH. "Idaho's Public Health Districts are committed to working to increase access to affordable health care. We jointly declare our support of well-founded, viable efforts from Idaho's legislature."

Idaho's seven local health districts provide essential health services and work to assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable. However, local health districts regularly see patients in their clinics with health needs far greater than the services they can provide and in many cases, patients will end up in emergency rooms seeking care for late stage serious health conditions that could have otherwise been diagnosed, treated and in many cases, cured.

By offering affordable health insurance to Idaho's 78,000 residents in need, we can extend positive health outcomes beyond the individuals receiving it - such insurance would alleviate the nearly \$36 million tax burden currently being paid by the state catastrophic health care program and county medically indigent program. Helping to provide proper health care to those in need, saving taxpayer dollars, and working to fulfill public health's mission of *Healthy People in Healthy Communities* will bolster the health of Idahoans for generations to come.

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