



February 28, 2020

The Honorable Ron Travis
425 5th Avenue North
Suite 678 Cordell Hull Bldg.
Nashville, TN 37243

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dear Representative Travis:

We are reaching out to thank you for supporting Medicaid expansion in Tennessee. Your leadership on this issue is commendable. Medicaid expansion would be a boost to our economy, provide additional jobs, keep rural hospitals open, and most importantly, provide access to needed medical care to hard working uninsured and underinsured Tennesseans.

As you may know, estimates show that the working poor are those most impacted by the lack of Medicaid expansion in Tennessee. By pursuing Medicaid expansion, Tennessee's economy would see \$27.5-31.5 billion additional dollars in net federal funding according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Urban Institute. A University of Tennessee study predicts millions of dollars in additional sales tax revenue for state and local governments in addition to the federal dollars. Additionally, states that expanded Medicaid saw decreases in unmet addiction treatment needs, demonstrating that this could be a powerful tool for Tennessee's work to combat addiction to opioids, meth and other substances. According to a 2018 Sycamore Institute report, states with Medicaid expansion had lower premiums for Marketplace insurance plans, demonstrating how this benefits more than those directly provided health care access through Medicaid expansion.

The Healing Trust is a private foundation that funds over 80 nonprofits serving the 40 counties of Middle Tennessee. Since our inception, we've distributed more than \$92 million in grants to support physical health, mental health, substance abuse recovery, and healing from abuse, violence, or neglect. The majority of those served by our grantees are uninsured or underinsured, most of whom would benefit from Medicaid expansion. We also incubated and launched The Sycamore Institute, the state's only nonpartisan, non-institution based public policy research center.

While many of our grantees are part of the health care safety net – charitable clinics, federally qualified health centers, nonprofit mental health providers – they do not have the sufficient infrastructure to meet all of the uninsured needs. We believe that Medicaid expansion would complement their work; they will still provide needed access to primary care for the underinsured while Medicaid expansion would allow access to specialty care services provided in the private sector health systems.

Your leadership on this issue is applauded, and we hope that you are successful in leading these efforts. If we can be of assistance to you in these endeavors, please do not hesitate to contact us.

All my best,



Kristen Keely Dinger, LAPSW
President and CEO, The Healing Trust