



March 2, 2026

The Honorable Ben Watson
Chairman
Health & Human Services Committee
Georgia State Senate
325-A CLOB
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Kay Kirkpatrick
Vice Chairwoman
Health & Human Services Committee
Georgia State Senate
421-B State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Ed Setzler
Secretary
Health & Human Services Committee
Georgia State Senate
322-A CLOB
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Sonya Halpern
Member
Health & Human Services Committee
Georgia State Senate
303-B CLOB
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Chairman Watson, Vice Chairwoman Kirkpatrick, Secretary Setzler, and Senator Halpern:

On behalf of Health Students Taking Action Together (H-STAT), we write to strongly support SB 380, legislation that would expand Medicaid in Georgia and ensure more people in the state have access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare while reducing overall healthcare costs. [H-STAT](#) represents the collective voices of hundreds of healthcare students and trainees across Georgia who are dedicated to improving health outcomes for all citizens. We urge the Health and Human Services in the Georgia State Senate to support this bill.

As of March 2026, Georgia remains [one of ten states](#) that have not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. As a result, around [1.3 million](#), or 12% of Georgia's population, are uninsured with around 200,000 people in Georgia falling in the "[coverage gap](#)", earning too much income to qualify for traditional Medicaid but too little to afford private insurance or Marketplace subsidies. By expanding Medicaid, Georgia would extend coverage up to 138% of the federal poverty level, close the coverage gap, and provide access to necessary preventive care, mental health service, and prescription medications.

Financially, Medicaid expansion would provide significant economic benefits to Georgia. Annually, Medicaid expansion would allow Georgia to draw billions in federal funding, with the federal government covering [90% of the cost](#) for newly eligible enrollees. These taxpayers dollars can be re-invested to strengthen Georgia's healthcare system. These federal dollars can further support Georgia's hospitals. In

many instances of providing care to uninsured patients, hospitals do not receive payment. The cost of this uncompensated care is estimated to be [\\$2.1 billion](#) in Georgia. As a result, these costs are shifted to insured patients through [higher premiums](#) and to taxpayers through state and local funding. Notably, Medicaid expansion in respective states [boosts job growth](#) via federal funding allows healthcare facilities to invest in infrastructure, hire more staff, and increase demand for medical visits. In sum, these effects would particularly benefit several of Georgia's rural hospitals, which face disproportionate rates of uncompensated care and staffing shortages, forcing several of them to [close in the state](#).

The benefits of Medicaid expansion extend to the health of people in Georgia. Georgia ranks [45th in the country](#) for access to healthcare. This low ranking is reflected by the high uninsured rate, widespread rural hospital closures, long travel distances to primary care, shortages of mental health providers, and persistent disparities in chronic disease outcomes. Over [40% of all emergency department visits](#) in Georgia were potentially avoidable if earlier intervention occurred through accessible primary care. With Medicaid expansion, people in Georgia have [improved access to preventive services](#) such as primary care or mental health services, thus reducing costly emergency department visits in the state. This improved access to care translates to [reduced mortality](#) and [improved management](#) of health outcomes.

Medicaid expansion under SB 380 is a more effective and comprehensive solution to Georgia's health crisis than Georgia's Pathways to Coverage program which offers restricted benefits and time-limited eligibility. The Pathways to Coverage program imposes enrollment caps, [administrative barriers](#), and benefit limitations that make it difficult for many eligible individuals to maintain continuous coverage. As a result, only 1% of the 100,000 eligible Georgians for the program were enrolled. By contrast, Medicaid expansion would bring predictable federal funding and economic benefits to the state while improving preventive care access.

In conclusion, we strongly support SB 380, as Medicaid expansion can address the health crisis in Georgia while providing economic benefit. Thank you for your consideration of the issue. We look forward to working with you to promote the health of people in Georgia. If you have any questions, please contact Nicholas Wilson, H-STAT President, at nicholas@healthstatgeorgia.org.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Wilson
H-STAT President
Health Students Taking Action Together