

**Wyoming Medical Society
Position Statement
Regarding Medicaid Expansion Under the Provisions of the ACA
October 2012**

Background

The Wyoming Medical Society Board of Trustees faced one of its most difficult challenges in recent Society history when it considered whether the Society should take a position on whether Wyoming should participate in Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This issue is one of the most complex, politically and fiscally challenging choices facing our Governor and state legislature, and our organization was specifically asked to provide the Governor with its position on the question.

The Board carefully considered the arguments both for and against Medicaid expansion, dedicating substantial time and effort to analyzing the data and studying the results of the recent Medicaid-expansion membership survey. In addition to the survey data, a majority of the Board found the following points persuasive in voting to approve the Society's position supporting the expansion of Medicaid in Wyoming.

- WMS has a longstanding commitment to advocate for increased access to coverage, and healthcare, for all Wyoming citizens. Given the ACA as it stands today, WMS leadership concluded that supporting the expansion of Medicaid was the position most consistent with that principle of the options currently available to Wyoming. Expanding Medicaid in Wyoming, as envisioned by the ACA, is estimated to increase enrollment in the program by 40% while only increasing the state's expenditure 1.2% by 2019. It is therefore economically feasible for Wyoming to pursue this expansion without having to limit services to enrollees, or jeopardize Medicaid-participating providers by cutting existing financial support for services.
- The Board recognizes and shares concerns expressed by members that expanding Medicaid carries questions and challenges. These include stretching our already fragile provider population, and adding patients to an already underfunded and sometimes inefficient program. Also, the Board is concerned that the Federal Government may not be able to continue subsidizing states in these efforts to cover the uninsured and underserved.

WMS leadership weighed the possible limitations along with the projected positive economic impact for the state, and is encouraged at Wyoming's diligence in working to redesign and restructure the current Medicaid program with considerable physician input. It's anticipated that expanding Medicaid could equal more than \$40 million in net savings to Wyoming. With this all carefully considered, WMS leadership decided to support the state's effort to expand Medicaid in order to serve and care for Wyoming's working poor, and most needy.

A document outlining the specifics of the current program, expansion details and key concerns of leadership is available for members on the WMS website.

Position Statement

The Wyoming Medical Society (WMS) supports the expansion of Wyoming's Medicaid program under the provisions contained in the ACA. WMS physicians believe it is critical to provide access to quality healthcare for all Wyoming citizens.

WMS represents a diverse population of Wyoming physicians who - like the rest of the state's constituents - have varying opinions about the appropriateness of expanding government programs. While WMS formally supports expanding Medicaid in Wyoming, we strongly urge Wyoming's elected leaders to carefully consider the costs and benefits that expansion of this program will bring to Wyoming citizens and to the workforce of healthcare professionals who serve them.