



Opportunity & Prosperity: The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce supports policies that increase opportunity and economic mobility for our community, through encouragement of a balanced and sustainable economy and the reduction of barriers to fulfilling employment.

- State
 - o Reduce barriers to affordable health insurance and increase access to healthcare for NC's workforce through the expansion of Medicaid.

Providing access to quality, affordable healthcare through Medicaid expansion will help improve the health and productivity of North Carolinians. Currently, the healthcare coverage gap includes approximately 600,000 North Carolinians who will benefit from health insurance that allows them to seek care and treatment. Expanding Medicaid will improve the lives of those who are able to access healthcare while also increasing the current workforce that our growing region needs to remain competitive. Benefits of expansion include:

- Lowering costs for everyone by decreasing private health insurance premiums.
- Creating jobs and stimulating the economy.
- Supporting the people who make up the workforce by providing access to healthcare services.
- Protecting workers and families from health-related financial strain, medical debt, and bankruptcy.
- Helping people with chronic conditions and substance use disorders access treatment.

Medicaid expansion has been one of the most hotly debated topics in the nation over the last decade, especially in North Carolina. The 2022 Long Session of the North Carolina General Assembly marked a shift in the debate as the economics of the issue became clearer. The leadership of each Chamber of the General Assembly and the Governor agreed that Medicaid should be expanded. The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce supports these efforts and supports a final agreement that ensures the approximately 600,000 people in the current coverage gap can access healthcare.