



July 27, 2022

The following is a joint statement of the member organizations of Southerners for Medicaid Expansion, regarding the news that the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 does not include a provision to close the Medicaid coverage gap

“Today marks five years to the date that Senator John McCain's (R-AZ) thumbs down helped save the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion for millions of Americans and thousands of people in West Virginia. On this happy anniversary, Senate Democrats have put forward a reconciliation package that fails to close the Medicaid coverage gap and fulfill the promise of the law they worked so hard to pass and defend.

While we applaud the announced agreement to extend the enhanced premium tax credits that bring down the costs of health insurance for millions of families, this package does nothing for those stuck in the coverage gap without enough income to qualify for these credits. If the reconciliation package is passed without a fix for the coverage gap, 2.2 million people—primarily Black and brown Americans who live in the South—will be left behind with nothing.

The proposed deal would abandon our communities at a time when growing abortion restrictions make access to comprehensive health care even more urgent. It would leave low-wage workers who currently shoulder the highest health care costs and heaviest health consequences with no help whatsoever.

Our friends, neighbors and loved ones have been without health care for years and some have died of preventable causes because of callous inaction by our states' leaders to expand Medicaid. We strongly urge Senate Democrats and the Biden administration to add a provision that closes the Medicaid coverage gap to this package.

Failure to act now would be a shameful abandonment of the promise of the Affordable Care Act, leaving the poorest Americans to face an indefinite future without health care.”

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Southerners for Medicaid Expansion is a coalition of hundreds of community leaders, grassroots organizations, and nonprofit policy think tanks across eight states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas—banding together to lead health equity movements across Southern states that have not expanded Medicaid. More information available at southerners4medex.org