

Resolution #3
Recommendation: Do Pass
Action Taken: _____

Subject: Resolution on Expanding Health Coverage to the Poor in South Dakota
Source: Crossroads, Medary, and Bear Butte Conferences

Whereas, Jesus said he would be found among the poorest people as we help them; and we live every day affirming our baptismal promises to strive for justice and to serve others following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who healed the sick and spoke up for the marginalized; and

Whereas, Although someday there may be other options to provide for healthcare for our lowest-income uninsured neighbors, South Dakota currently has an option for Medicaid expansion, which would cover all the lowest-income adults ages 19-64, and which is the reality in 38 other states; and

Whereas, Medicaid expansion would end a serious health inequity, would cover vast unmet medical needs that cannot be met by the churches and other non-profits in addition to what they do already, and would save lives and provide treatments for disabilities, mental health and addictions. It would not only pay for healthcare but also support health workers and facilities, especially rural ones, and improve the general economy of the state; and

Whereas, Medicaid expansion would help prevent bankruptcies, hunger, and family financial havoc, and to turn down the federal funds available for this healthcare is to “walk by on the other side of the road” where an estimated 40,000 South Dakotans could be receiving needed health coverage; and

Whereas, South Dakota could provide Medicaid expansion for several years with no cost to the state, by accepting the new 2021 federal incentive covering all of South Dakota’s state share; and

Whereas, churches are encouraged by the Biblical witness and the ELCA to advocate for people in need;

Therefore, Be It Resolved that, with boldness of faith and love of neighbor, the South Dakota Synod ELCA urge South Dakota’s Governor and Legislature and state voters to secure the blessing of healthcare for the lowest-income South Dakotans by adopting Medicaid expansion for South Dakota; and

Be It Further Resolved, that congregations and conferences and the South Dakota Synod ELCA be provided with information encouraging and enabling them to advocate directly for this coverage, urging compassion and health for the poor; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Bishop of the South Dakota Synod communicate this resolution to the Governor and Legislature of South Dakota in a timely fashion.