

# CARING FOR HEALTH:

## Our Shared Endeavor in the ELCA



*“We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have an enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people as a shared endeavor. Our commitment comes in grateful response to God's saving love in Jesus Christ that frees us to love and seek the wellbeing of our neighbor.” (p. 2)*

- “Health is central to our well-being, vital to relationships, and helps us live out our vocations in family, work, and community...Caring for the health of others expresses both love for our neighbor and responsibility for a just society. As a personal and social responsibility, health care is a shared endeavor.” (p. 1)
  - “The Christian Church is called to be an active participant in fashioning a just and effective health care system. Responding to those who were sick was integral to the life and ministry of Jesus and has been a central aspect of the Church's mission throughout its history. Health care and healing are concrete manifestations of God's ongoing care for and redemption of all creation.
  - “Health care as a shared endeavor entails a comprehensive and coherent set of services of good quality care throughout one's life span. At a minimum, each person should have ready access to basic health care services that include preventive, acute, and chronic physical and mental health care at an affordable cost.” (p. 13)
- “At the center of Lutheran ethics is the love (agape) shown [to] us by God through Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for us [so] that we may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). We hear what Scripture asks of us: “How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?” (1 John 3:17). In response to God's love, therefore, we work to promote the health and healing of all people.
  - “We also are a people compelled by justice. Jesus called justice one of the “weightier matters of the law,” too often neglected by religious people (Matthew 23:23). Our search for justice is a call from God, a concern especially for the “rights of the needy” (Jeremiah 5:28). Because health is central to personal well-being and functioning in society, a just society is one that supports the health of all its members. Thus, our common effort to provide access to health care for all is a matter of social justice for all people.” (p. 18)
  - “Achieving these obligations of love and justice requires sacrifice, goodwill, fairness, and an abiding commitment to place personal and social responsibilities of love and justice above narrower individual, institutional, and political self-interests.” (p. 20)

**Source: “Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor,” the 2003 ELCA Social Statement on health, healing, and health care**

# EXPANDING MEDICAID IN SOUTH DAKOTA

A Call to Action by the 2021 South Dakota Synod Assembly

## Why Expand Medicaid? Some fast facts from Bread for the World - South Dakota:

- As we care about the well-being of our neighbors, we have the privilege, responsibility, and joy to help make healthcare available to the sick and suffering. In South Dakota, Medicaid expansion is a readily available option. In June of 2021, our Synod Assembly voted to support Medicaid expansion for South Dakota in an affirmation of our baptismal promise to strive for justice and to serve others following the example of Jesus Christ.

## Who this helps:

- When people lose jobs, such as in a pandemic, Medicaid expansion can provide health coverage.
- Individuals and families affected by mental health illnesses or substance abuse issues.
- For tribal members, more health services will be covered and more jobs created.
- Rural communities will be supported financially so they can improve healthcare facilities.

## Scripture:

- Luke 5:17-26 & Mark 2:1-12: Jesus heals a paralytic
- Luke 10:25-37: Being Neighbor; Parable of the Good Samaritan
- Matthew 25:37-40: Welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick

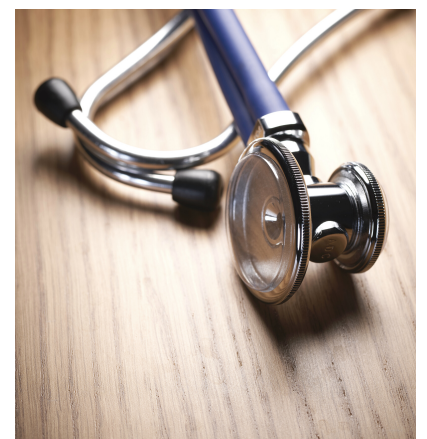
## How to Act:

For the well-being of all in South Dakota, please urge our Governor, State Legislators, and voters to adopt Medicaid expansion.

- **Contact decision makers:**
  - **Call Governor Noem: 605-773-3212 or**  
<https://governor.sd.gov/office/contact>
  - **Write: State Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501**
  - **Find Your 3 State Legislators at**  
<https://sdlegislature.gov/legislators>
- Ask them to pass Medicaid expansion at the earliest opportunity (at a special session or their 2022 Session)
- Sign Petitions for both ballot initiatives.

**For more information (including more detailed and specific data) or to sign a petition for the ballot initiatives:**

**Bread for the World, South Dakota,** <https://www.breadsd.org/>  
**South Dakotans Decide Healthcare,** <https://southdakotansdecide.org/>  
**Dakotans, for Health,** <https://www.dakotans4health.com/>



**South Dakota Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran**  
**Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.