



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Position: The National Multiple Sclerosis Society supports expansion of Medicaid so that qualified Alabamians have access to affordable, comprehensive health care.

Medicaid

Medicaid provides health coverage to nearly 9 million non-elderly individuals with disabilities. It offers [prescription drug coverage and standard medical benefits](#) like physician and hospital care; home- and community-based services that allow people with MS to remain independent and avoid premature admission to costlier institutional facilities; and [other forms of long-term services and support](#).

Medicaid in Alabama

- Total enrollment: nearly 1.02 million
- Percentage enrollees disabled: 21 percent
- Number enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid: 206,715

Medicaid Expansion

The Affordable Care Act sought to simplify Medicaid eligibility and provide coverage to all persons with income below 133 percent of the federal poverty level. The U.S. Supreme Court decision rendered the Medicaid expansion a state option.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) typically is diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, when most are raising families, advancing careers and maximizing their earnings.

MS experts recommend people living with MS should begin treatment with one of the disease-modifying medications as soon as possible. Benefits of these medications may include:

- Reduction in numbers of new lesions;
- Reduction in the number of exacerbations (also called relapses, attacks, flare-ups);
- **Reduction in progression of disability; and**
- **Probable reduction in future disease activity and improvement in quality of life.**

The financial impact of MS on individuals and families can be devastating. Seventy percent of persons with MS report difficulty paying for health care, even with health insurance, and many are forced to delay doctor visits and split their medication doses or skip them altogether.

Leveraging federal dollars to provide health insurance to low-income Alabamians is a smart investment that could provide up to 370,000 individuals, including people with MS, affordable, comprehensive coverage.

Alabama will leave nearly \$12 billion in federal health care dollars on the table over the first seven years of full ACA implementation and forfeit an overall economic benefit of \$20 billion.

New federal spending could generate \$20 billion in related private-sector growth and **another \$1.7 billion in Alabama state tax revenue** for the same seven-year period.

For more information, please contact Clark Thomason, clark.thomason@nmss.org or 1.800.344.4867, ext. 15976