Medicaid Expansion: Background Information

We can increase access to affordable health care by expanding Medicaid.
- 37 red and blue states have expanded Medicaid, including Indiana, Ohio and now Utah, Nebraska and Idaho.
- If North Carolina expanded Medicaid and closed the coverage gap it would give more than 500,000 people access to affordable health insurance.

Covering more uninsured people lowers everyone else's premiums.
- When uninsured people need care, they often go to the one place that won't turn them away: the ER
- The ER is an expensive care setting, and when patients can't pay, hospitals often eat the cost.
- Hospitals offset that loss by charging higher rates for insured patients, called "cost-shifting," and that translates into higher premiums for every individual and employer who buys health insurance.
- Premiums for people who buy their own health insurance are 7% lower in states that have expanded Medicaid than in states that haven't.

Expanding Medicaid is good for business.
- Closing the gap would create an estimated 43,000 jobs and billions in economic activity in NC in first 5 years.
- When Michigan (about the size of NC) closed their coverage gap, it created 39,000 jobs.
- Many of these jobs would go to the 44 rural NC counties where a hospital is one of 5 biggest employers.
- Would bring ~$4 billion dollars in federal funding into the NC economy each year.
- NC taxpayers are already helping to pay for closing the coverage gap in other states, we should to bring some of those federal tax dollars back home.

Closing the coverage gap helps law enforcement and others fight the opioid epidemic.
- An opioid crisis is ravaging communities across our state.
- 37% of adults with opioid use disorder are uninsured.

- Among North Carolinians who received emergency care due to an opioid overdose this year almost half were uninsured or paid out-of-pocket.

- Many of these individuals fall in the coverage gap and would receive access to affordable health care if NC closed the gap.

- If NC closed its coverage gap, up to 150,000 people with a behavioral health need could enroll in Medicaid.

- Access to affordable health care helps people access life-saving treatment.

- Closing the coverage gap has been key to Ohio's positive results in turning the tide on the opioid crisis.

  - 75% of previously uninsured people with opioid use disorders now have improved access to care.

We need to close the coverage gap to expand NC veterans' access to affordable health care.
- Many veterans are ineligible for health care through the VA: one in four veterans who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan are without coverage.

- There are 30,000 uninsured NC veterans, and an additional 23,000 uninsured spouses and children.

- Yet veterans are more likely to have chronic conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes, more likely to report psychological distress, and more likely to experience homelessness than others.
- 23,000 veterans would gain access to health insurance if we expanded Medicaid.
- States that closed the coverage gap have a lower rate of uninsured veterans than those that did not.
- When Kentucky closed its coverage gap, in two years the percentage of their veterans who were uninsured was more than cut in half.

There is energy on both sides of the aisle to expand Medicaid.
- Both parties have introduced legislation to close the coverage gap that would require no investment of state tax dollars.
  - Federal government would pay 90% of costs.
  - Remaining 10% would be funded by health care providers.
- Now is the right time to act:
  - Uncertainty over major federal changes to the healthcare system is now behind us.
  - NC Medicaid is strong and stable.
  - Our neighbors in Virginia just passed a bipartisan bill to close their coverage gap.