



August 22, 2022

Dear Steve Lawler and members of the N.C. Healthcare Association:

For the last decade, the undersigned organizations have tirelessly advocated to increase access to affordable healthcare for more than 600,000 North Carolinians by expanding Medicaid.

We recognize, too, that hospitals have urged lawmakers to expand Medicaid. However, the N.C. Healthcare Association’s priority to protect revenues for members over expanding Medicaid, which benefits the poorest North Carolinians, has halted the historic progress our state has made toward equitable healthcare.

We urge the N.C. Healthcare Association to make Medicaid expansion your top priority in order to fulfill the association’s vision for [“A North Carolina where high-quality healthcare is equitable and accessible for all.”](#)

Prioritizing affordable healthcare for over 600,000 North Carolinians—many of whom are veterans, single mothers with children, small business owners, and people employed in essential services—is the single, most important step the state can take to achieve health equity for all North Carolinians.

However, there have been trends and practices in our state's hospitals and healthcare systems that raise alarms for advocates who share your vision for equitable healthcare.

Too many everyday North Carolinians struggle with medical debt, are hounded by collections, and will never be able to reach their dream of becoming homeowners, buying a car, or moving upwards in life because they got sick and did not have the means to pay.

A [Johns Hopkins study](#) found that many of our state's hospitals are **not meeting their financial obligations to taxpayers by failing to provide sufficient charity care to their most financially vulnerable patients.**

During what the N.C. Healthcare Association has described as the [“worst financial scenario of most of our careers,”](#) nearly all of our state's major hospital and healthcare systems [have enjoyed record profits during the pandemic.](#)

North Carolina also has one of the most consolidated hospital markets in the nation [with nearly three-quarters of hospitals belonging](#) to larger systems. **But these consolidated markets have not led to better prices.** We are [second to only Louisiana for having the most expensive health insurance premiums in the Southeast.](#)

We must draw attention to the business practices that hospitals have been operating under, as they have devastating consequences for income inequality, the financial wellbeing of families, and the overall health of communities.

We urge the N.C. Healthcare Association to [prioritize Medicaid expansion over revenues](#) to demonstrate that our state's hospitals and healthcare systems are with us in the fight for health equity and the wellbeing of the most vulnerable families in the state.

Finally, while advocates celebrate Senate Bill 408 as a step in the right direction to expand Medicaid, SB 408 does [not guarantee](#) that 600,000 North Carolinians will get the healthcare they have been waiting for during the last decade. Senate Bill 408 proposes to yet again study and research Medicaid expansion when we all know that healthcare can't wait.

We are counting on hospitals and healthcare systems to make expanding Medicaid a reality for our families, neighbors, and state.

In Solidarity,

A Better Chance A Better Community (ABC2)

Action NC

Black Workers for Justice

Carolina Jews for Justice

Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy

Down Home NC

Fayetteville PACT
Fruit of Labor World Cultural Center
Health Care Justice NC
Indivisible Asheville/WNC
Interfaith Initiative for Social Justice
League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear
Local Progress North Carolina
National Nurses United
NC Poor People's Campaign
North Carolina Council for Women
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Carolina Justice Center
North Carolina NAACP
North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, UE Local 150
Orchid Bloom
Pisgah Legal Services
Planned Parenthood Votes! South Atlantic
Pro-Choice North Carolina
Seeking Justice Charlotte
Southern Workers Assembly
Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry of North Carolina
United for Respect