



## NEWS RELEASE

*from the*  
**Senate Democratic Policy Committee**  
*Senator Lisa M. Boscola, Chair*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Potential Impact of Medicaid Expansion is Focus of State Senate Roundtable Discussion**

**SCRANTON** – As Gov. Tom Corbett continues to mull the decision to expand Medicaid in Pennsylvania, the Senate Democratic Policy Committee today brought together legislators, health care professionals, advocates and experts to discuss the potential impact of Medicaid expansion in Pennsylvania.

Under the Affordable Care Act, expanding Medicaid would make all adults between the ages of 19-64 with incomes at or below 133 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) eligible for the program. This expansion would cover vulnerable persons as well as healthy, able-bodied individuals. A ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2012 gave states the option to decide whether to opt in or out of expanding their individual Medicaid program.

The discussion, held at the request of Sen. John Blake, focused on the possible economic, budgetary and healthcare impacts of expanding Medicaid.

"With Medicaid expansion, Pennsylvania could provide health care insurance to 650,000 people currently without such insurance," said Blake. "The state would also benefit from \$4 billion in federal investment and we'd see the creation of 41,000 jobs in the health care and human service industry.

"Much has been said about Medicaid expansion in the past 6 months, and much more needs to be said so everyone understands the impacts moving forward. The people of Northeastern Pennsylvania need to hear the facts. It was good to hear what the experts had to say about what we believe is an issue that should have been decided by the Corbett administration a long time ago, as so many other states have done so for the benefit of their citizens."

"Expanding Medicaid in Pennsylvania would have a major impact on the quality of health care, our economy and our state's finances," Senate Democratic Policy Committee Chair, Lisa Boscola said. "I hope we can separate out some of the hysteria and inflamed rhetoric and arrive at a logical and reasoned position on whether Medicaid expansion is good or bad for our state.

"We have a great panel with extensive and varied understanding of the pros and cons of expanding. Hopefully, today's discussion will give us a better grasp of what expansion would mean to our healthcare system, hospitals, and low income workers who cannot afford the rising costs of health insurance, as well as what expansion will mean to our job market, economy and our state's finances."

Dr. Carter Price of the RAND Corporation provided an in-depth look at their study regarding the positive economic impact of Medicaid expansion in Pennsylvania.

As other studies have confirmed, Price said Pennsylvania will pay nothing with Medicaid expansion during the first three years of the program, 5 percent from 2017 to 2020, and 10 percent after that.

"The 10 percent cost is a much better deal than Pennsylvania gets for current (Medicaid) enrollees. The state is now responsible for about 45 percent of the cost for enrollees," Price said.

Price said his RAND Corporation study found that the estimated impact of Medicaid expansion greatly exceeds the estimated costs, and result in a significant return to Pennsylvanians. According to the study, over seven years, Medicaid expansion would increase the gross domestic product of the state by at least \$3.2 billion annually, or by more than \$23 billion through 2020.

One of the panelists, Regional Hospital of Scranton CEO M. Brooks Turkel, said Medicaid expansion has to happen.

“We applaud those who are trying to make changes in a very conservative, considerate fashion. However, it is fully obvious to us that Medicaid expansion is a logical way to improve care in our community and to reduce the cost of care in our community,” Turkel said.

The roundtable panel also included:

- **Robert Steigmeyer**, president & CEO, Geisinger – Community Medical Center
- **M. Brooks Turkel**, CEO, Regional Hospital of Scranton
- **Gary Drapek**, executive Director, United Way of Lackawanna and Wayne Counties
- **Alex J. Hazzouri**, CEO, The Advocacy Alliance
- **Jim Willshier**, director of Policy & Partnership, Pennsylvania Assoc. of Community Health Centers (PACHC)
- **Mary Lucille Czyzyk**, executive director, Scranton Primary Center
- **Wasique Mirza**, MD FAPC, chief medical officer, Scranton Primary Center
- **Linda Thomas Hemak**, MD, president & CEO, Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education
- **Mike Hanley**, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Centers of NE PA