

2025 Cover Georgia Advocacy Toolkit



To support your advocacy efforts,
we've created this Toolkit to help you:

Contact or meet with legislators

Use social media for advocacy

Share your health care story

Understand and talk about Georgia's Medicaid Coverage Gap

Georgia Can't Wait!
CLOSE THE COVERAGE GAP



Arranged by:

Georgians for a Healthy Future
Cover Georgia Coalition

Connect with us:

coverga.org

healthyfuturega.org



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Contact or meet with legislators

You can start making a difference in how health policy is made in our state and have your voice heard by contacting your legislators directly! Legislators hear from lobbyists all day long, but it is important that they hear from concerned citizens who have a personal story to share.

1 Find Your Legislator's Contact Information: If you know who your legislators are, you can find their contact information on the State Senate (upper house) and House of Representatives (lower house) websites. You can also search for your legislator using your address on sites like PluralPolicy.com.

2 Decide How to Contact Them: You have the option of contacting your elected official by phone, email, mail, and person-to-person meeting. Social media also may be an option.

Tips for calling, writing a letter or sending an e-mail:

- Use your own words. Form letters/e-mail are tallied up – but not necessarily read.
- Brevity matters. Lawmakers are inundated with correspondence so be concise.
- Include contact information, including cell phone, so staff can respond during work hours.

Tips for a Legislative visit:

- Be specific about your issue: "I would like to discuss closing the health care coverage gap in our state."
- Be flexible on the timing: Legislators may be in meetings with colleagues or other constituents.
- If you're bringing allies, tell the scheduler how many people will be attending.

For the meeting:

- Be respectful: Tone matters, even if you and the lawmaker disagree.
- Do your homework: Know how your lawmaker has voted on key bills and where they stand on key issues.
- Tell your story: Use your own experiences or other local examples/data.

Afterward:

- Provide a leave-behind: Lawmakers will start a file if you give them a simple one-pager that outlines your key points.
- Make it clear that you want to keep the discussion going.
- Thank the lawmaker for their time and encourage them to reach out if they need any more information.



Some advocacy organizations, such as Georgians for a Healthy Future, provide legislator contact forms on their websites. Additionally, they offer direct support to Georgians, preparing them to effectively communicate with legislators during designated Advocacy Days throughout the legislative session.



Use social media for advocacy

Social media is a critical part of any successful outreach or advocacy campaign. Advocates can use Social Media proactively to:

- Share/Repost news and information about important issues and upcoming events.
- Raise awareness and become more closely-connected networks of allies and supporters.
- Build relationships with reporters, lawmakers and other important stakeholders.

Join the Conversation on Social Media

Throughout the legislative session and all year we invite you to share on social media why you are in support of closing Georgia's Health Care Coverage Gap! Please use the hashtags **#CloseTheCoverageGap** and **#CoverGA** in your posts.

Sample Coverage Gap Graphics

360,000
Georgians don't have access to affordable health insurance and can't get the care they need.

Where you live *should not* impact whether you can get healthcare.
But the Medicaid coverage gap is contributing to our rural healthcare crisis.

People living in Georgia's coverage gap include:
12,000 construction workers
32,000 veterans
19,000 restaurant and food service workers
6,000 people working in grocery stores

Georgia's Medicaid Coverage Gap
In Georgia, a family of three making \$8,000 a year make "too much" to qualify for Medicaid.
Qualify for Medicaid Coverage: No access to affordable coverage
Qualify for Substantial Coverage: No access through the 20% Market-rate
Medicaid access to coverage with Medicaid expansion

Georgians are being left behind. It's time for Georgia to expand Medicaid and close the gap.

Black and brown Georgians disproportionately fall into the Medicaid coverage gap.
We cannot achieve our vision of health equity without expanding Medicaid.
Race & Ethnicity Breakdown of Georgia's Coverage Gap
White: 70%
Black: 23%
Hispanic: 6%
Other: 1%
67% are people of color

Medicaid expansion is good for our state's economy.
The federal government covers 90% of the costs to expand Medicaid.
Those dollars go toward keeping:
• Our workforce healthy
• Our hospitals open
• Our economy strong

People who have affordable health insurance can:
Afford their prescription medications
Get regular check-ups and preventive screenings
Treat conditions to stay healthy and remain in the workforce



Here's how to download these social media graphics: 1) Save this document as a PDF. 2) Left-click to select/highlight the image. 3) Right-click. 4) Select "Save as." to download the image. For more resources and graphics, visit the resource library at COVERGA.ORG.



Share your health care story

Georgia state leaders need to hear from you! Sharing your experience with Georgia's Medicaid programs including Georgia Pathways to Coverage Program and Peach Care for Kids lets state leaders know what's working, and what's not. Your story can provide first-hand details of why we need to change policies for the better, and which programs we must champion.

1

Outline your story: Tell us your story about accessing health care in Georgia! Share your experiences in a narrative format with a beginning, middle, and end. Be specific about your successes and challenges. What's your vision for a better health care system in Georgia? Don't hesitate to express your feelings. Use the questions below to help outline your story.

- Do you currently have health insurance?
- Have you ever been uninsured in Georgia?
- If you've been uninsured, how did it impact your life?
- Have you ever delayed getting care because of cost or lack of insurance?
- Have you ever been denied health care, if so why?
- Do you have any medical debt?
- What has been your experience with Georgia's Medicaid programs, including Pathways to Coverage?
- If you have Medicaid coverage how has it impacted your life?
- Have health challenges affected your employment status?
- Have you ever lost your Medicaid coverage?
- Why is access to health care important to you and your community?
- What suggestions do you have for state leaders to improve healthcare access in Georgia?

2

Decide how to share your story: You've outlined your powerful story – now it's time to share it! Consider the various ways you can amplify your voice:

- **Written.** Submit your story directly to your legislator or as a written testimonial for websites or newsletters.
- **Video/Audio.** Record a short video or audio message sharing your experience.
- **Social Media.** Create a post using relevant hashtags to reach a wider audience.
- **Public Speaking:** Share your story at a community event, or legislative hearing, with your legislator on advocacy day at the capitol.



Georgians for a Healthy Future and the Cover Georgia Coalition are working to close the Medicaid coverage gap in Georgia. They are collecting stories from individuals about their experiences with Medicaid programs, including Georgia Pathways to Coverage and PeachCare for Kids. You can share your story directly on their websites in written, video, or audio format.



The Coverage Gap

Many Georgians are living uninsured, without access to affordable health coverage. They work in jobs that don't offer health insurance, can't afford private insurance, and make "too much" to qualify for Georgia Medicaid. They live in what is called the "Medicaid coverage gap." Georgians in the coverage gap earn less than the federal poverty line, approximately \$15,650 for a family of two or \$26,650 for a family of three.

In Georgia Medicaid coverage is limited to individuals (residents of the state, US citizens or lawful permanent residents) who meet income limits and fall into very specific eligibility categories:

- Pregnant women
- Children and teenagers under 19 years old.
- Seniors, ages 65 or older
- Individuals who are legally blind
- Individuals with a disability
- People in need of nursing home care
- Adults who meet stringent documentation requirements for work or other activities

Close the Coverage Gap Talking Points

Key Message:

Taking steps to **close the Medicaid coverage gap could offer vital support to 400,000 hardworking Georgians who are currently uninsured** and who put their health on the back burner in order to support themselves and their families. Closing the gap helps these folks go to a doctor or fill a prescription when they need to, and it strengthens the state's workforce. Georgia misses out on \$3 Billion for each year that our state does not close the coverage gap; this money is supposed to help Georgians get health care.

- Nearly 7 in 10 Georgians in the coverage gap live in a working family household yet they still struggle to afford health coverage.
- One out of every four Georgians in the coverage gap has a mental health or substance use issue that they can't access consistent care for because they lack health insurance.
- Many people in Georgia and across the nation are just one illness or injury away from being unable to work.
- Those who are already sick or injured are often willing to work but unable to do so because they don't have access to adequate care to heal.
- When more hard-working Georgians can access affordable, high-quality health care, their health and the health of our whole state will improve.
- Closing the coverage gap would spur economic growth and workforce development for the state.
- Ten years of data from 40 other states that have closed their coverage gaps shows that it is fiscally irresponsible to keep nearly 400,000 Georgians in the coverage gap.
- Every year, hospitals provide millions of dollars in free or low-cost care to treat uninsured Georgians. This system leaves Georgians less healthy than they could be with regular medical care and in danger of being charged with unaffordable medical bills.
- Denying hardworking Georgians the care they need is not only costly for the patients, but it harms our state's workforce and economy as well.
- Studies have found that covering the folks in the coverage gap could create 30,000-64,000 jobs in Georgia. One in every six of those jobs would be located in Georgia's rural communities. Closing the coverage gap would generate an estimated \$110 million in new state and local tax revenue each year.

Data from kff.org and coverga.org and others. Find sources for this resource at coverga.org.