



## **2017 Ballot Question #2: MAINERS FOR HEALTH CARE — TALKING POINTS**

*Would expand Medicaid to provide health insurance for 70,000 low-income Mainers who do not presently have coverage*

### **Unitarian Universalist Principles:**

- *First Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person*
- *Second Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations*

---

### **What is Question 2, and what does it do?**

The ballot question: “Do you want Maine to expand Medicaid\* to provide healthcare coverage for qualified adults under age 65 with incomes at or below 138% of the federal poverty level, which in 2017 means \$16,643 for a single person and \$22,412 for a family of two?” Yes ( ) No ( )

\* Medicaid is a Federal/State partnership which provides health care to low-income families

### **The Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) endorses the YES position on Question 2, for these reasons:**

**Health care is, fundamentally, all about compassion.** Access to healthcare is a human right and one that will improve health, strengthen families, and preserve Maine’s community hospitals and health centers.

**Increasing access to health care is affirming justice and equity in Maine.** This is an affordable way to increase healthcare coverage for the people who need it most in Maine. This access will prevent family illness or health problems from turning into bankruptcy, loss of a home, and destitution. An estimated 70,000 Maine citizens would qualify for *MaineCare* with this additional funding.

**Health care for all is an affirmation of the worth and dignity of every person.** This is about making healthcare more affordable to the lower income citizens who live in our state. A person’s health issues are not dependent on one’s ability to work, and access to health care should not be dependent on one’s access to income.

**Equity.** 31 states and DC have accepted and use the federal funding. The evidence is clear that the citizens in these states have [better coverage](#), [less financial stress](#), [improvements in health](#), [better prevention](#), more [opioid addiction treatment](#), and stronger [rural hospitals](#). Research shows that the states with expanded Medicaid now have little difference between low-income and high-income people when it comes to insurance coverage. The non-Medicaid states still have big disparities. *[see back for additional information]*

**Additional Background:** This issue, commonly referred to as “Medicaid expansion,” would expand Maine's [Medicaid](#) program known as *MaineCare*. Under the [Affordable Care Act](#) (ACA), federal money was provided to assist states in the expansion of healthcare services. As of January 1, 2017, Maine had not expanded MaineCare to include people under the age of 65 who met specific poverty guidelines.

The state legislature passed bills expanding Medicaid under the ACA five times, but Governor Paul LePage (R) vetoed each bill. In his 2014 State of the State address, the Governor stated his opposition to Medicaid expansion, saying “[we] must protect our hard-working families from the higher insurance premiums and higher taxes that will result from further expansion.” Neither of these alleged consequences has been documented in the 39 states where Medicaid has already been expanded.

Through a citizen’s ballot initiative, 66,434 signatures were collected from all 16 Maine counties to bring the measure to the state legislature for its 2017 session. The initiative was introduced into the Maine State Legislature as Legislative Document 1039 (LD 1039). On April 27, 2017, the state Senate voted to indefinitely postpone a vote on the initiative. As the Legislature did not act on the initiative, the measure was certified for the ballot in November and will be appear as Referendum Question 2.

MUUSAN has worked hard with our faith-community and secular partners to achieve Medicaid expansion in Maine for several years. This goal has been a pivotal focus in our efforts to move toward health care for all, as a matter of justice, equity and compassion.

We urge all Maine Unitarian Universalists not only to vote YES on Question 2 but also to engage actively with the campaign, mobilizing volunteers in your congregations to canvass, phone-bank, demonstrate, and advocate with the public in every way possible this fall.

The following websites are available for information about Question 2, volunteering opportunities, and opportunities for advocacy. MUUSAN encourages our members to seek out meetings near your home communities and to use these sites to stay informed about health care issues for our state and nation.

<http://mainersforhealthcare.org/about/>

<http://www.mejp.org/>

<http://www.mainecahc.org/>

<http://www.maineallcare.org/>

[https://ballotpedia.org/Maine\\_Question\\_2,\\_Medicaid\\_Expansion\\_Initiative\\_\(2017\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Maine_Question_2,_Medicaid_Expansion_Initiative_(2017))