

MUUSAN TO WORK FOR QUESTION 2

By Rick Davis, UU Church of Belfast

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Question #2 on Maine's November 7 ballot is a citizen-driven initiative to expand MaineCare eligibility to approximately 70,000 Mainers, most of them working adults. MaineCare is Maine's version of Medicaid, the federal-state partnership that provides healthcare coverage to low-income and disabled persons. The MaineCare expansion would bring more than \$500 million in federal funds into Maine each year, supporting about 3,000 new jobs spread across the entire state.

The state's share of this expansion would rise to a cap of 10% -- about \$54 million -- in two years. Reductions in state payments for uninsured care and reduced costs in the criminal justice system would offset about half of that cost. Increased revenue from new jobs would also contribute to the state's share.

Thirty-one states have already expanded their Medicaid programs and their citizens are reaping the benefits, including good health coverage, less financial stress, improved health, and access to treatment for opioid addiction, which is at crisis levels in Maine and elsewhere. In those states, rural hospitals like Waldo County General Hospital have benefited from increased Medicaid payments. That reduces the amount of uninsured care that we all pay for through our own insurance plans.

Not one of those states has rescinded its decision to expand Medicaid coverage. Instead, earlier this year, the Governors in those states, including red states like Kentucky and Ohio, pressured their U.S. Senators not to repeal Obamacare, which would also repeal the Medicaid expansion program.

The Maine legislature has passed bills to expand MaineCare five times. Each time, Governor LePage has vetoed the bill and the legislature has not been able to override his veto.

At its meeting on September 9, MUUSAN (the Maine UU Statewide Advocacy Network) confirmed its commitment to make Question 2 a priority effort between now and election day on November 7. Question 2 is in complete conformity with our first two UU principles: promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. It is the right thing to do.