



2024 SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD) is a non-profit membership organization that serves as the primary care association for South Dakota and North Dakota, supporting community health centers, South Dakota Urban Indian Health, and Oyate Health Center in their mission to provide access to quality health care for all Dakotans.

Health centers provided primary care, behavioral health services, and/or dental care to more than 125,000 South Dakotans in 2022.



HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS

South Dakota is facing crisis-level workforce shortages across primary medical care, dental, and behavioral health professions. Health centers across South Dakota have identified workforce as their number one challenge, and the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) projects this trend will continue.

From 2020 to 2030, South Dakota is expected to experience a:

- 7.5% decrease in supply in primary care while demand is expected to increase by 7.9%;
- 8.2% increase in demand for dental health professionals; and
- 6.7% increase in demand for behavioral health services.

In order to reverse this trend and keep South Dakota communities healthy and economically viable, comprehensive workforce solutions are urgently needed. CHAD is committed to working collaboratively with lawmakers and other stakeholders to address this issue, and we have outlined a variety of recommended solutions, which include:

- Develop a coordinated, statewide strategy on health care workforce training and career laddering;
- Simplify licensing and ensure professionals can practice at the top of their scope;
- Maximize and increase loan repayment and scholarship programs; and,
- Increase on-the-job training and remote learning.

Additional details about these workforce policy positions can be [found here](#).



ACCESS TO MEDICAID AND MEDICAID EXPANSION

In 2022, South Dakota voters made the decision at the ballot box to expand Medicaid in our state. They did this because Medicaid expansion will make our families healthier and our economy stronger. It delivers affordable healthcare for those working hard at jobs that don't offer insurance and brings our tax dollars home from Washington to create jobs, keep rural health care facilities open, and grow our economy. From its launch in July 2023 through December 2023, more than 15,000 South Dakotans have enrolled in the newly available health coverage, with more enrolling each day.

CHAD opposes any effort to undermine the voters' decision to expand Medicaid in South Dakota, including unnecessary work requirements. Access to affordable health insurance has a positive effect on the ability to obtain and maintain employment. Indeed, most Medicaid enrollees are already working. For most who are not working, this is due to disability, illness, caregiving, or school attendance. South Dakotans already have a strong work ethic, and it is not worth the investment of state officials' time and processing additional paperwork to invest resources in a problem that does not exist. Furthermore, research suggests that Medicaid work requirements do not lead to improvements in employment, job training, or other related activities. Instead, work requirements can lead to substantial coverage loss, even for eligible working individuals.¹ This is because of the cumbersome paperwork and enrollment processes. Let's ensure that eligible South Dakotans can access the health coverage they need.



FOOD AND NUTRITION ACCESS

Health centers understand that there are many factors which contribute to a person's health status. Access to health care is certainly an important one, but socioeconomic factors such as access to nutritious food play a significant role as well. Food insecurity places individuals at increased risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and kidney disease. This can lead to greater health complications, emergency room usage, hospital stays, and readmissions.² Because of this, health centers across South Dakota have begun screening patients for food insecurity and are identifying local resources and partnerships to help address the food and nutrition needs of their patients. CHAD supports efforts to create more sustainable access to healthy food and remove cost barriers for families and individuals.

communityhealthcare.net

¹ Medicaid Demonstrations and Impacts on Health Coverage: A Review of the Evidence
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/medicaid-demonstrations-impacts-health-coverage-review-evidence>

² Connecting Health and Food Access
<https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/nutrition-health>