

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE RESPECTFULLY CALLING ON THE U.S. CONGRESS TO WORK TOWARD THE IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES DURING BOTH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE RECOVERY PERIOD.

RESOLUTION NO: R-141-2020

REQUESTED BY: Councilmembers Parker, McKenzie, Thomas, Roberto, Smith, Singh, and Rider

PREPARED BY: Council

APPROVED: 5-19-2020

APPROVED AS AN EMERGENCY MEASURE: _____

MINUTE BOOK: 84 PAGE _____

WHEREAS, every person in the City of Knoxville, the State of Tennessee, and the United States of America deserves high quality health care; and

WHEREAS, states that participated in the 2016 Medicaid expansion were able to increase insurance coverage yet continue to struggle to ensure access to health care for all residents of their state; and

WHEREAS, current bipartisan efforts to expand Medicaid in Tennessee would extend coverage to an estimated 300,000 residents, falling short of ensuring quality health care for all Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, the rising costs of health care add challenges to our already strapped municipal budget and our small businesses, which keep our communities thriving; and

WHEREAS, seventeen Tennessee counties have no emergency room access due to rural hospital closures, resulting in an increased burden on Knoxville-area emergency health care services; and

WHEREAS, many people delay seeking needed health care due to an inability to pay or due to living in an area void of health care options, leading to a sicker and poorer population in the long run; and

WHEREAS, the inability of all residents of the State of Tennessee to access affordable and appropriate preventative health care services places unnecessary and more costly demands upon emergency health care services in and around the City of Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, academic research suggests that expansion of Medicaid both protects public health and supports rural hospitals; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the need to ensure individual access to preventative health care in order to protect the overall public health; and

WHEREAS, the current COVID-19 pandemic has led to record levels of unemployment, loss of employer-sponsored health insurance, and has taken a profound toll on the community's mental health, all of which is placing significant demands on the health care system and the State of Tennessee's Medicaid program; and

WHEREAS, in order to equitably and effectively address the health care needs in the City of Knoxville and State of Tennessee, including the additional burden created by the COVID-19 pandemic, we must urge the U.S. Congress to expand health insurance coverage to provide comprehensive coverage to every resident of the United States without any cost sharing; and

WHEREAS, the Health Care Emergency Guarantee Act would guarantee all residents full coverage for medically necessary health care without copays, deductibles, or other out-of-pocket costs until an approved COVID-19 vaccine is widely available to the public; and

WHEREAS, the Medicare for All Act of 2019 would provide similarly expanded coverage in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, other COVID-19 relief legislation packages will be and are being considered for adoption by Congress, some of which will provide sufficient health care coverage as provided above and some of which will not; and

WHEREAS, only comprehensive coverage can assure people that, no matter what health condition is ultimately responsible for symptoms, or what treatment turns out to be necessary, all residents of the U.S. will be financially protected.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE:

SECTION 1: The Council of the City of Knoxville hereby urges the U.S. Congress to adopt federal legislation to provide universal, comprehensive health coverage with zero cost-sharing for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the Health Care Emergency Guarantee Act, and beyond, such as the Medicare for All Act of 2019, and calls on Congress to work toward the immediate enactment of this, or substantially similar legislation, to ensure appropriate health care coverage for all residents of the U.S. during both the current COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery period to follow.

SECTION 2: Upon adoption, the City Recorder is hereby respectfully requested and directed to forward a true and correct copy of this Resolution to the City's U.S. Congressional delegation to apprise them of City Council's respectful request.

SECTION 3: This Resolution shall take effect from and after its passage, the welfare of the City requiring it.

Presiding Officer of the Council

City Recorder