

## **A Statement from Catholic Charities of St. Louis regarding Missouri Amendment 2**

Catholic Charities of St. Louis joins Catholic Charities agencies across the state, the Catholic bishops of Missouri, and the Missouri Catholic health systems in supporting Amendment 2 on the August 4<sup>th</sup> ballot, expanding Medicaid eligibility in our state.

Medicaid is a joint program of federal and state governments that provides public health insurance to low-income Americans. Currently in Missouri, 88% of those enrolled in Medicaid are children, people with disabilities, and seniors. The remaining 12% are pregnant women and parents with custody of children.

Missouri is one of only 13 states in which non-disabled adults between the ages of 19 and 64 are generally ineligible for Medicaid no matter how low their income. Even custodial parents doing the important work of raising children are often ineligible: a single parent raising two children, for instance, qualifies for Medicaid only with annual income below \$4778. This is the third most restrictive eligibility requirement for custodial parents in the country.

If the ballot initiative to expand Medicaid eligibility is successful, Missouri will become the 37<sup>th</sup> state to provide Medicaid to non-disabled adults between the ages of 19 and 64 with income below 138% of the federal poverty level. This means a childless adult would qualify with annual income below \$17,609; a single parent raising two children would qualify with annual income below \$29,974.

More than 230,000 Missourians currently living without health insurance would gain access to Medicaid with a successful ballot initiative. Missouri would demonstrate its commitment to the dignity of human life, and more of our neighbors and friends can be the kind of parents, employees, students, and citizens that good physical and mental health permits. Expanding Medicaid eligibility also brings other benefits to the state:

- Protects our hospitals, particularly those in rural areas

More than 15 hospitals have closed in Missouri since 2014, 10 of those in rural areas where closures are largely due to Missouri's failure to expand Medicaid eligibility.

- Brings federal taxpayer dollars back to our state

The federal government provides 90% of the cost of insuring these new Medicaid enrollees. This means more than \$1 billion annually in Missouri taxpayer dollars will return to our state.

- Creates jobs

According to a study commissioned by the Missouri Foundation for Health, expansion of Medicaid eligibility would create 16,330 new jobs in Missouri between 2022 and 2026; the majority of these would pay at least \$15 per hour.

**Please prayerfully consider voting yes on Amendment 2 on August 4.**

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