



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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Congress must right the wrong of denying health coverage to 2 million of the poorest Americans

Statement by Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs:

An [agreement](#) has been announced by Senate Majority Leader Schumer and Senator Manchin to extend the Affordable Care Act premium tax credit subsidies for 3 years and to allow negotiations to reduce the cost of prescription drugs. That is good news, and we need to make sure every member of Congress knows how important it is to get these provisions to final passage.

But so far it looks like the agreement is leaving out more than 2 million poor adults without insurance because they live in states that refuse to expand their Medicaid programs.

The Coalition on Human Needs calls upon Congress to right this wrong.

Sixty percent of these two million are people of color. More than 800,000 are women of reproductive age, at a time when maternal mortality rates are climbing, with disproportionately high maternal death rates for Black and Latino women.

The laudable goal of reducing health insurance costs will be denied to people with annual incomes below the federal poverty line of \$13,590 because they live in states that have refused them Medicaid coverage. Current law excludes them from access to Affordable Care Act insurance; only people above the poverty line can get ACA coverage. This is a wrong the new reconciliation bill can and should address.

Earlier this month, nearly one in four people with household incomes up to \$25,000 said that they were forced to reduce or go without paying for basic needs including medical care **almost every month** in order to pay an energy bill. It is much worse for those at the bottom half of this very low income level. Inflation hurts them the most. Lack of medical care during a time of multiple health threats is inhumane. It is also shortsighted, leading to costs and losses we will all incur.

The Coalition on Human Needs is an alliance of national groups representing human service providers, people of faith, policy experts, and labor, civil rights and other advocates for meeting the needs of people with low incomes. People in our nationwide networks have already sent more than [56,000 letters to Congress](#) urging coverage for the 2 million uninsured poor people and for extending the ACA premium subsidies. There is still time for Congress to listen, and to act.