



Questions for the Candidates: Idaho's Health Insurance "Coverage Gap"

Close the Gap Idaho encourages constituents to actively engage legislative candidates on Idaho's health insurance coverage gap and discuss policy solutions to the issue. Please see below for suggested questions to ask candidates for office in person, over email, in letters to the editor, and at public forums.

1. Many Idahoans do not understand that health insurance and Medicaid are not available to all hardworking families in the state, but because of this "coverage gap," 78,000 Idahoans (most are working at least one job and support children) are delaying health care until their situations become dire and costly.
 - Do you believe that Idaho needs to reduce dependence on emergency rooms, incentivize healthy behaviors, and create accountability in our health care system?
 - If yes, how do we achieve this?
2. If Idaho passes a full solution to the coverage gap, the state will generate hundreds of millions of dollars in new economic activity, create thousands of jobs, and eliminate inefficient and costly state and county indigent programs.
 - Do you support bringing home our federal tax dollars to invest in an Idaho solution that closes the coverage gap and creates a more efficient and cost-effective health system in Idaho?
 - If not, how do you propose to provide comprehensive, affordable, and accessible health care to low-income individuals?
3. In the news, we have seen a lot of stories about Idahoans who are needlessly suffering and dying because they do not have access to affordable specialty care, prescription coverage, or mental health care. For example, Jenny Steinke, a 36-year-old mother from Idaho Falls, passed away last year because she fell in the coverage gap and could not afford to see a specialist to treat her asthma.
 - As a candidate, how do you respond to families who have lost a loved one because the individual fell in the coverage gap and did not have access to desperately needed health care?
 - How do I explain to my neighbors living in the coverage gap why a full solution has not yet passed the Idaho Legislature?
4. Idaho has over 70 federally funded community health center clinics that serve Idahoans, including those without insurance. Although these clinics do great work providing primary care (medical, dental, and some behavioral health), there are times when a person needs hospital or specialty care.
 - Have you visited a community health center in your district?
 - If yes, what did you learn about the uninsured population in Idaho and the type of care they have access to? If not, do you think your opinion on how we should solve the coverage gap issue would change if you visited a community health center?
5. On the last day of the 2016 Legislative Session, it was announced that a new legislative workgroup will be tasked with finding a complete, Idaho-based solution to close the coverage gap in 2017.
 - Do you have plans to engage with the workgroup, whether you are an invited member or not, to ensure their recommendations represent Idaho's values and address your district's health care needs?
 - How will you facilitate collaboration in your district between elected officials, health care providers, nonprofits, and health care consumers to advance a full solution to the coverage gap?

Voter and Candidate Information:

For general Idaho voter information, candidate information, voter registration forms, absentee ballots, a guide to voter participation, and where to vote, please visit: <http://www.idahovotes.gov/>.

❖ Primary Election, Tuesday, May 17, 2016

NOTE: Party affiliation determines who a person may vote for in the primary election. Voters must choose which ballot/political party they would like to cast their votes for.

- *Unaffiliated* (no party designated): A person may affiliate as Republican at the polling place and vote the Republican ballot. They may also ask for a Democratic ballot without affiliating with the Democratic Party.
- *Republican*: A person must be affiliated as a Republican in order to vote the Republican ticket. The deadline to affiliate as a Republican was March 11, 2016. In short, a person can only vote the Republican ballot if they are registered as a Republican.
- *Democratic*: Any person can request a Democratic ballot without affiliating as a Democrat. A person can be unaffiliated, a Republican, a Libertarian, etc. and still vote the Democratic ballot. In short, anyone can vote the Democratic ballot.

** Many races in Idaho are determined in the Primary Election, making this election particularly important!*

❖ General Election, Tuesday, November 8, 2016

About the Coverage Gap Issue:

There are 78,000 Idahoans who lack any form of health insurance coverage and fall into the “coverage gap.” People in the coverage gap earn too little to qualify for assistance on Idaho’s insurance exchange and don’t qualify for traditional Medicaid. Passage of a full solution to the coverage gap would provide these individuals with comprehensive health coverage, including primary care, emergency room and hospital care, specialists, prescription coverage, and mental health care. A full solution will create a more efficient and cost-effective health system in Idaho and spends our tax dollars wisely.

Remember, closing the coverage gap will:

- Provide comprehensive health coverage to the 78,000 Idahoans in the Gap.
- Prevent hundreds of deaths in Idaho every year.
- Support Idahoans who are working hard to build a future for their families.
- Eliminate costly state and county indigent programs.
- Create 15,000 jobs and generate hundreds of millions of dollars in new economic activity.