



## Medicaid In SC: You Lie, Jim Clyburn

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Government-managed health care is growing by leaps and bounds in South Carolina ...

There is an infomercial masquerading as a “news article” about U.S. congressman Jim Clyburn of South Carolina in this morning’s editions of *The (Anderson, S.C.) Independent Mail*. Written by Kirk Brown (who is usually a decent investigative reporter), the embarrassingly fawning piece is a retrospective on Clyburn’s involvement in the civil rights movement as well as a contemporary look at his über-liberal policy agenda – spearheaded by another massive expansion of government-subsidized health care in the Palmetto State.

In other words, it is just the sort of press an aspiring hereditary socialist monarch would expect ...

In the article, Clyburn takes shots at South Carolina’s fiscally liberal GOP-controlled legislature – as well as its “Mo’ Money, Mo’ Problems” governor Henry McMaster – for allegedly refusing to “accept federal dollars to expand the state’s Medicaid program.”

“Our state, it seems to me, can ill-afford a lot of the ideological positions it seems to be taking,” Clyburn said. “How do we justify not expanding Medicaid for people who need health care?”

Yeah ... *about that* ...

We hate to interrupt Brown’s infomercial – which he billed as the latest in “a series of stories celebrating Black History Month” – but South Carolina *absolutely is expanding Medicaid for people who need health care*.

Dramatically so, even ...

According to a report filed just two weeks ago by Jerrel Floyd of *The (Charleston, S.C.) Post and Courier*, more than one million Palmetto State residents are currently receiving benefits from the program. That equates to roughly *one out of every five citizens*.

The cost of all that dependency? A whopping \$7.7 billion – a figure which has climbed by 32 percent in the last eight years, according to Floyd. Enrollment has soared at roughly the same pace – expanding by 260,000 beneficiaries. Meanwhile, an astounding 60 percent of live births in South Carolina were financed by Medicaid – according to the latest data available from the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF). And while this figure did not make it into Floyd’s report, we crunched the numbers and found that this astronomical percentage tied South Carolina for the fifth-highest mark in the entire nation.

And it is creeping higher every year ...

Moreover, McMaster’s status quo budget – which has been effectively adopted by the S.C. House ways and means committee – throws even more money at this entrenched dependency, proposing to expand enrollment (and its costs) even further.

Nonetheless, Clyburn and other liberal leaders continue to complain that the state is not expanding Medicaid under the provisions of former U.S. president Barack Obama's 2010 socialized medicine monstrosity – Obamacare. Their argument? That Medicaid funds associated with this additional expansion would only require taxpayers in the Palmetto State to pay a 10 percent match compared to the typical 30 percent match associated with such disbursements.

Obamacare, readers will recall, was supposed to be repealed by Republicans once they gained control of the U.S. congress and the White House in 2016. Did that happen? *Of course not ...*

Not only could the GOP not muster the votes to repeal even a sliver of the program, a growing number of Republican states are embracing Obamacare's expansion – apparently unaware that the nation guaranteeing the 90 percent payment match is \$22 trillion debt. Or that they, as citizens of that nation, are on the hook for the borrowed trillions.

Democrats in South Carolina are ramping up pressure on McMaster and the GOP to expand Medicaid – saying the move would provide coverage to as many as 312,000 additional residents (at a cost to state taxpayers of nearly \$390 million a year). State senator Gerald Malloy has even introduced legislation (S. 36) that would put the question on the statewide ballot in 2020.

Assuming voters were to approve the measure next fall it would still require McMaster's sign-off, though.

Also worth considering? Eligibility and cost estimates associated with the Obamacare expansion are likely to be far higher than what South Carolina would actually experience if it accepted the federal handout.

According to Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute, “actual enrollments following expansion have exceeded estimates in every state that has expanded Medicaid under (Obamacare), in most cases by double digits and in some cases by more than 100 percent.”

Tanner also cited a recent study from Oregon which revealed “that Medicaid coverage generated no significant improvements in measured physical health outcomes.”

Which is worth considering seeing as South Carolina's recent Medicaid expansion has similarly failed to improve outcomes for its citizens.

Our view? *Hopefully at this point it is obvious ...*

First and foremost, anyone who tells you South Carolina is “not expanding Medicaid” or “failing to expand Medicaid” or “refusing to expand Medicaid” *is lying to you*. South Carolina is growing this program *by leaps and bounds* ... just not as fast as liberals like Clyburn would prefer.

Second, while we believe there is a clearly a role for health care as part of a limited, market-based social safety net, America ought to be doing everything in its power to *reduce* dependency through innovation, competition and deregulation ... as well as championing pro-free market policies that keep people from having to rely on ineffective government-provided health care (and other benefits) in the first place.

It should *not* be using borrowed money as a bribe to artificially inflate dependency ...