

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

August 29, 2024



Who We Are.



Natalie Crawford

- Native Georgian, lifelong Republican
- Chair, Habersham County Commission, ACCG & GMRC
- Helped save local hospital, increase county reserves, and grow the economy
- Importance of reaching across divides



Georgia First

- Nonprofit think tank and advocacy organization
- Advocates for strong fiscal policies that create a robust middle class
- Stands as a voice above the fray for democracy and elections
- Fights to expand healthcare access and affordability

What is the coverage gap?

- The coverage gap impacts about 500,000 Georgians across the state
- Individuals in the gap cannot afford private health insurance yet earn just above the threshold to qualify for Medicaid
- Georgians in the gap includes farmers, veterans, part-time, hourly, and gig workers and their families

What is the solution?

- PeachCare Plus
- Close the coverage gap through a free-market-based approach
- Georgians decide what works best for our health system
- Position Georgia to be a national leader in healthcare

Closing the Coverage Gap is Fiscally Responsible for Georgia.



Keeps \$3.6 billion
of Georgians' federal
tax dollars in Georgia



Washington initially
pays 90% of the cost
plus an additional
\$1.2 billion bonus



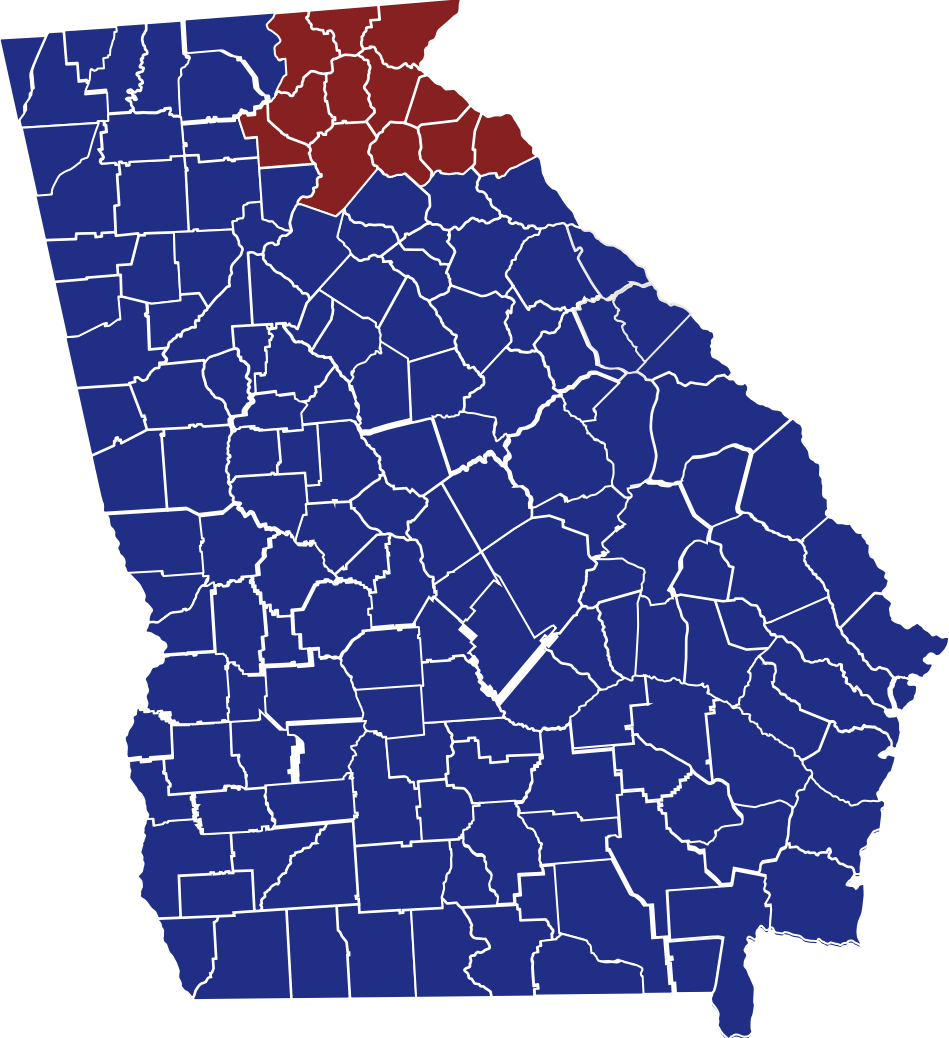
Generates other
savings –
from child welfare to
law enforcement

Closing the Coverage Gap Boosts the Economy & Grows the Middle Class.

- **Spurs more than 51,000*** new jobs statewide
most not in health care
- **Puts more money in the pockets of average Georgians**
nearly \$900 per household*
- **Grows our economy**
increases economic output by \$9.4 billion
- **Reduces costs for everyone**
10% savings in premiums

**projected annual increase, 3-year averages*

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission - Economic Impact Results



GMRC Member	Jobs (Emp)	Economic (Output)
Banks	49	\$6.2
Dawson	117	\$18.5
Franklin	75	\$13.0
Habersham	126	\$19.8
Hall	1,206	\$233.8
Hart	71	\$10.5
Lumpkin	104	\$14.6
Rabun	76	\$10.5
Stephens	77	\$12.8
Towns	44	\$7.1
Union	89	\$13.6
White	94	\$13.1

Closing the Coverage Gap Will Boost the Economy in Georgia Mountain Counties.

3 years after closing the coverage gap, counties in the Georgia Mountains can expect to see an average increase of:

- **177 jobs**
- **\$31.1 million** in economic output
- **\$17.8 million** in GDP
- **\$13.8 million** in personal income

Source: [Economic Impacts of Medicaid Expansion in Georgia](#)

Averages calculated based on data for Banks, Dawson, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White counties

Closing the Coverage Gap Helps Save Rural Hospitals.

- Hospital closures require residents to travel hours to access care, cause local job losses
- Closing the coverage gap provides higher, more reliable reimbursement for providers
- Incentivizes more primary care providers to rural areas of the state



Nine rural Georgia hospitals closed since 2005

Up to 18 more are now in danger

Closing the Coverage Gap Helps Reduce Infant and Maternal Death Rates.

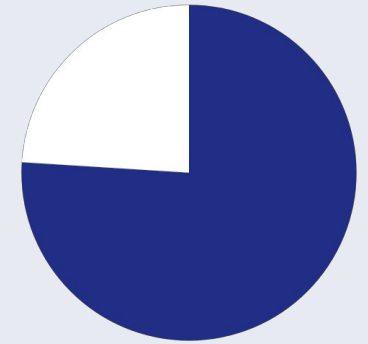
- Georgia has one of the country's **worst** maternal death rates
- Coverage prevents needless deaths and illnesses, leading to healthier children
- Encourages more specialty doctors to rural areas; many counties don't have a single pediatrician or obstetrician

Closing the Coverage Gap Increases Access to Mental Health Services.

- Untreated mental illness can lead to crisis or crime
- Covering treatment shifts reliance away from overburdened emergency rooms, jails, and prisons
- Reduces burden on hard-working local law enforcement

Closing the Coverage Gap is Popular.

- Majority of people are more likely to vote for someone who supports closing the coverage gap
- Good health care policy and good economic policy
- Benefits not just those in need of coverage; it benefits all Georgians



**76% support
among Georgians**



**60% support
among Republicans**

The Latest.

- First-ever legislative hearing in March
- Senate Committee tie vote; support from both Republicans and Democrats
- Comprehensive Health Coverage Study Commission to study the coverage gap with final report due by end of this year (*initial meeting held July 25*)
- Georgia Pathways 1115 waiver set to expire September 2025

How You Can Help.

- Talk to your legislators
- Contact your county commission or city council about passing an urging resolution
- Invite us to your Rotary, Kiwanis, and/or other civic organization meetings

Still unsure or need more information?

Review the economic impact report online or pick-up a hardcopy of the report today (supplies limited).



For More Information

www.bridgega.org

natalie.crawford@georgia1st.org

