

September 28, 2016

To the Work Group for Health Care Alternatives for Citizens below 100 percent of Poverty level, Co chairs: Senator Hagadone and Representative Loertscher

From: Dr. Ingrid Brudenell, Emeritus Professor of Nursing, Boise State University, currently living in Cascade and Boise Idaho. Representing myself as a concerned citizen and member of Close the Gap Idaho.

I have participated in legislative hearings about the coverage gap and possible solutions as a member of the Idaho Nurses Association, and met with legislators during lobby days with the American Cancer Society. I know that the Working Group is making good faith effort to find ways to close the health care coverage gap. I appreciate your efforts and commitments. By now you will have had one of the best educations in health care and economic policy taught by the public as well as experts. I am not going to repeat what you have already learned. I am going to provide another perspective for the important work that you are doing.

I would like you to look at your solution through the lens of human rights, and specifically the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (ratified by the United States in 1948). Article 25 explains that all people have a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of a person and their family; an adequate standard of living which includes housing and medical care with necessary social services. "Upstanders" are those who recognize when something is wrong and take action to make it right. You are in the position of an "Upstander" and can do something to correct an injustice and speak out for equality and fairness. The injustice is the lack of access to health care for those in the income gap who work but still earn too little to buy insurance. As an "Upstander" you may reach out to the "others" in our communities, who can only access health care through charity, sporadic emergency care, and who have no or limited access to preventive and restorative care. This is unfair. You have the authority and opportunity to act as an "Upstander" and do the right thing. To speak with your colleagues and close the health care coverage gap for 78,000 people, their families and communities. As "Upstanders" explain to colleagues why and how to close the gap.

You have the authority and great opportunity to craft an Idaho solution for the coverage gap which is fair. I hope that the solution will provide essential coverage, which includes medications and behavioral health. Our state plan should be cost effective and include both Federal and State dollars. Our plan should integrate the medical home or primary care model which has been shown to be effective. Many private insurance plans already incorporate the primary care model with a medical home. Community based primary care is a successful approach. Our state plan should control costs both in dollars and improved outcomes which are evaluated. Inefficient or ineffective programs could be eliminated. I have a special interest in the prevention and early diagnosis of cancer. Having access to preventive services is a critical part of individual health care. Improved access helps more than the individual, it impacts families, communities, and regions. I ask you to act and speak as an "Upstander" to close the gap. Thank you.