



Text File

Introduced: 6/22/2020

Bill No: 2020-0446, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, the global COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a massive public health and economic crisis, the deep impacts of which are intertwined, with our nation's states left to deal with both ends of the crisis on their own in many ways; and

WHEREAS, large-scale job loss puts into sharp relief the precarity of employment-based health insurance coverage, and, with the Congressional Budget Office forecasting an average unemployment rate of 15 percent in the second and third quarters of 2020, scores of Americans will lose their health insurance; and

WHEREAS, according to a recent analysis performed by the Kaiser Family Foundation, close to 17 million people could be newly eligible for Medicaid by January 2021, which is when unemployment insurance benefits are set to end for the majority of those who lost their jobs between March 1 and May 2, 2020; and

WHEREAS, concurrently, state revenues across the country have taken a drastic hit, with Pennsylvania alone facing down a precipitous 49.7 percent drop in revenues in the month of April alone; and

WHEREAS, Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) are used when determining the rate of federal matching funds that go toward specific medical and social service programs, such as Medicaid. These funds help states to offset fiscal obligations while preserving aid programs, including those meant for people experiencing economic hardship; and

WHEREAS, although both the President and Congress enhanced FMAP by 6.2 percent earlier this year, it falls short of the 12 percent enhancement over the two-year window that was enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 in response to the Great Recession, and will be insufficient for our present national circumstances, as state groups including the National Governors Association and the National Association of State Medicaid Directors call for greater increases; and

WHEREAS, HR 6800 of the 116th Congress, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act or the HEROES Act, passed by the House of Representatives on May 15, includes an FMAP enhancement of 14 percent beginning on July 1, 2020 and running through June 30, 2021, which would deliver an additional \$3.6 billion in federal funding to Pennsylvania for vital, life-changing and life-saving programs and provide millions with healthcare while we continue to combat the COVID-19 pandemic; and

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WHEREAS, without federal funding to support these programs, state legislations will turn to budget cuts for projects like transit systems, highways, development, utilities, public authorities, and more, which, in both the short- and long-term, further exacerbates recovery and hampers economic stability and stimulus, all while the nation descends further into an economic downturn; and

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh City Council affirmed in 2018 its recognition of healthcare as a human right.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh calls on the United States Senate to adopt the full Federal Medical Assistance Percentages funding enhancements in HR 6800; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Will of Council will be shared with the Offices of United States Senators Robert Casey and Patrick Toomey directly to communicate the will of this legislative body.