

# Daugaard To Set Up Study Of State Medicaid Expansion

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE — The South Dakota Legislature’s budget-writing committee rejected a plan to expand the Medicaid program Friday after a state official said Gov. Dennis Daugaard is setting up a group to study whether the state should cover thousands of additional low-income people in the program.

Sen. Stand Adelstein, R-Rapid City, proposed that about \$1.5 million in state money be added to the state budget so South Dakota could get \$58.3 million in federal funds to expand Medicaid and cover an estimated 48,000 additional people under the federal health care overhaul.

But the Joint Appropriations Committee voted 13-5 to reject Adelstein’s plan.

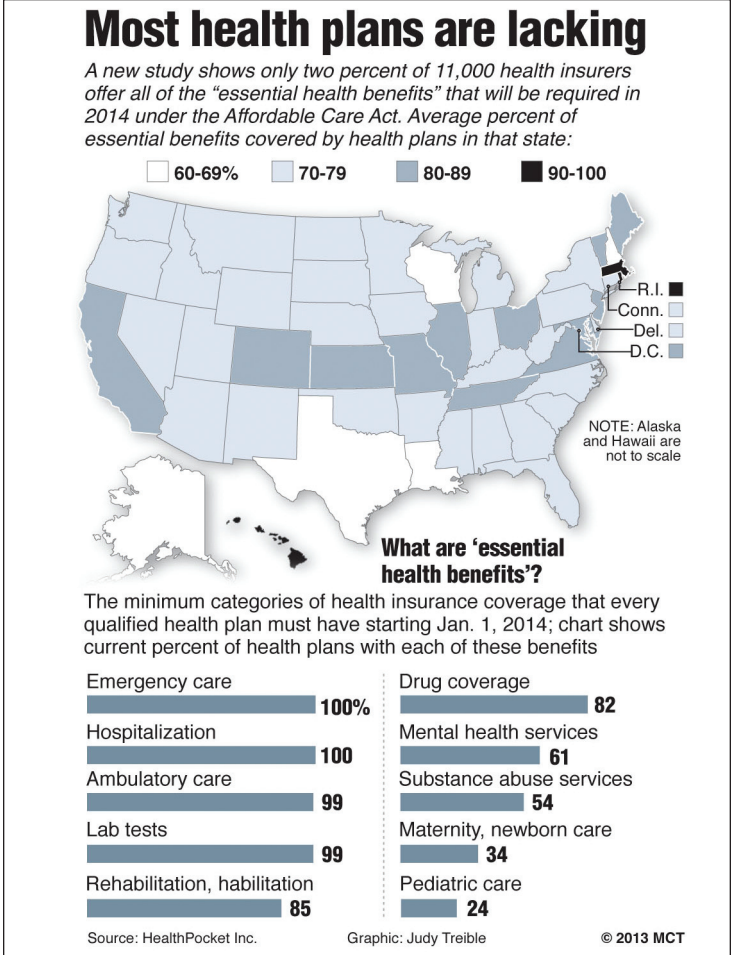
Deb Bowman, a senior adviser to Daugaard, said the Republican governor will appoint legislators and others to a study committee that will make recommendations on the advantages and disadvantages of expanding Medicaid.

If the Legislature decided now to expand Medicaid, the additional people would not be covered until Jan. 1, when that part of the federal health care law takes effect, Bowman said. If the Legislature delays a decision for a year and then passes an expansion, the additional people would be covered by July 1 next year, she said.

Daugaard has recommended that South Dakota delay a decision on whether to expand Medicaid because he is uncertain the federal government can afford to meet its pledge of paying most of the cost. The governor also continues to ask federal officials for flexibility to limit the expansion to only part of the 48,000 who would otherwise qualify.

Adelstein said the Legislature should approve a Medicaid expansion now to provide health care to the working poor as soon as possible.

In addition, hospitals have said they are unable to collect about \$90 million a year from low-income patients who have no insurance and are unable to pay their bills, Adelstein said. Hospitals then charge insured patients



more to offset losses in charity care, he said.

South Dakota’s Medicaid program now covers about 116,000 children, adults and disabled people. The expanded eligibility would add an estimated 48,000 people, mostly adults without children.

People earning up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level would be covered by the expansion, which the federal government would fully cover through 2016. The state’s contribution would rise in stages to 10 percent of the medical costs, but the state would have to spend some extra money to manage the larger program.

Daugaard would like to expand Medicaid to cover only those adults earning up to 100 percent of the poverty level. That would add only about 24,000 to the program. The other 22,000 will be eligible to get subsidized insurance through the insurance

exchanges set up in the federal health care law.

Bowman said those people who qualify for subsidized insurance would only have to pay 2 percent of their income to get that insurance.

Adelstein said the state could expand Medicaid coverage but withdraw that coverage if the federal government eventually breaks its promise to pay most of the cost.

But Rep. Mark Mickelson, R-Sioux Falls, said it’s difficult to take away a benefit after people get used to it.

Mickelson said he doubts the federal government will be able to meet its commitment to pay nearly all the cost of the Medicaid expansion.

“I am hesitant to make a decision bases on someone’s promise to pay when I don’t think over the long haul they’re going to be in any position to honor it,” Mickelson said.



KELLY HERTZ/P&D  
**ABOVE:** Yankton athlete Steve Wojciechowski lights the ceremonial torch to open the 2013 South Dakota Special Olympic State Basketball Tournament during opening ceremonies at the Summit Activities Center Friday morning. **BELOW:** Trevor Pisano of the Yankton Bulldogs gives a thumbs up to the crowd after scoring a basket against Brookings during opening day action at the South Dakota Special Olympic State Basketball Tournament at the Yankton Middle School old gymnasium.

## Olympics

From Page 1

servers, team photographers and personnel at information tables and hospitality rooms.

“We have a great group of volunteers that take care of this whole event,” said Sheila Woodward, who helps coordinate the tournament locally. “It’s pretty interesting when we have nine courts going at one time, and trying to get people off work on a Friday afternoon. But once people help out one year, they keep wanting to come back because it’s so much fun.”

Huether said that, like many volunteers, he believes helping with the tournament is a great way to give back.

“There’s so many ways you can give, whether it be your time, your talent or your treasure. But



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

time and talent just mean so much more,” he said. “Your voice is hoarse and you’re exhausted by the end of the day, but it is just so much fun.”

In addition to basketball games held at the Summit Activities Center and the Yankton Middle School, Friday’s activities included opening ceremonies and a banquet for the athletes. Games will resume today (Sat-

urday) at both locations. A skills competition and awards ceremonies will also take place.

Frosch said she was impressed with Friday’s turnout, noting that the event has grown considerably. This year’s tournament features almost 100 more athletes than last year, and most of the bleachers at both facilities were filled with supportive spectators.

“This tournament is almost as big as our state summer games, which use to be the big event of the year,” she said. “Yankton is a fabulous community to have this tournament in.”

“This is a big deal,” Huether added. “It shows the type of people we have living in this town. We care a lot about young people, a lot about education, and a lot about giving back.”

You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at [twitter.com/d\\_bartos](https://twitter.com/d_bartos)

### Special Goose Hunt Generates Big Interest


PIERRE (AP) — Nearly 1,000 hunters have applied to be part of a limited special hunt next month that will target Canada geese in six eastern South Dakota counties, far exceeding the expectations of state officials.

There are only 140 slots available. The Game, Fish and Parks Department will randomly select hunters and notify them by the end of next week, the *Capital Journal* reported.

Canada geese cause problems for farmers by feasting on crops such as corn and soybeans, particularly when they are molting and unable to fly. Since 2000, the state has spent more than \$4.3 million fighting the problem through efforts such as chemical deterrents and electric fences.


“Last spring the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated the population to be at about 270,000 — so about three times the number of geese that we want in South Dakota are currently here,” said Keith Fisk, administrator of the state’s Wildlife Damage Management Program.

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Dr. Adams is originally from Yankton, completed his undergraduate degree at South Dakota State University, and is a graduate of The University of South Dakota School of Medicine.

Dr. Adams completed his orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Kansas-Wichita and a fellowship in spine surgery at the Twin Cities Spine Center in Minneapolis, MN. He is board certified in orthopedic surgery and has also been a faculty member for the University of Kansas-Wichita orthopedic surgery residency program.

He will provide care for a multitude of musculoskeletal conditions with a subspecialty focus in spine surgery. Conditions that he will treat include cervical and lumbar spinal stenosis, scoliosis, disk herniations, sciatica, arthroscopic rotator cuff repair, total joint replacement of the hip, knee and shoulder, fracture care, carpal tunnel surgery and athletic injuries.

He is a member of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, North American Spine Society, and Scoliosis Research Society.

Dr. Adams will begin seeing patients at the Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. March 11, 2013.

**Appointments can be made by calling 605-665-1722.**

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