Medicaid Expansion Talking Points

The Affordable Care Act was a turning point for access to behavioral health coverage. Importantly, the ACA allowed states to expand Medicaid coverage for single adults up to 138% of the federal poverty level. This move has given millions of low-income Americans access to desperately needed mental health and addiction services for the first time.

Protecting Medicaid expansion is important to the behavioral health community because:

- People with behavioral health conditions are nearly one-third of the expansion population.

- Medicaid is a key financing source for fighting the opioid epidemic, providing access to some of the most effective addiction care including medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and life-saving overdose reversal medications.

- States have reduced their behavioral health spending in response to Medicaid expansion and cannot be expected to restore this funding should Medicaid expansion disappear.

- Expansion repeal would also eliminate future prospects for coverage for the 4 million uninsured people living in the 19 non-expansion states.

- Without the Medicaid expansion, low-income people across the country, many of whom are the working poor, would be left as they were before the ACA, with no pathway to affordable health coverage.