

**Award:** Golden Bedpan  
**Recipient:** States that refuse the Medicaid Expansion  
**Presenter:** Lisa Dixon

Hello again. My final task for this evening is the dubious honor of presenting the Golden Bedpan Award.

The Golden Bedpan is a very special award. While the rest of the award recipients this evening set out to work to improve the lives of others and to advance social justice, and distinguished themselves in doing so, the Golden Bedpan was created to honor those who followed a different path. These trailblazers deserve a truly unique form of recognition.

The Health Care Consumers Board of Directors awards the Golden Bedpan to the individual, or group of individuals, corporation, or political body that has distinguished itself, above all others, during the preceding year by its attack on the health and welfare of the people of its community.

There were plenty of wonderful choices this year, but we settled on a select number of particularly worthy candidates. This year we have chosen to acknowledge each and every state from these great United States that are refusing to make the ridiculously easy decision to expand Medicaid to their citizens under the Affordable Care Act.

You may be surprised to know that as of today there are somewhere between 19 and 24 different states that are either flat out refusing to expand Medicaid to their state, or considering alternative plans and have not committed one way or another. That means nearly half of the United States are turning their backs on the millions of uninsured low-income people of their state, and holding them hostage to an ideology and political game.

I mean look at this map, I feel like I'm getting flashbacks of the 2000 Gore vs. Bush election with all these red states. And I'm sorry if anyone is from any of these states (I'm looking at you Claudia...Miss Texas), but it's difficult to ignore the large red mass that takes up most of the south. And then there's Florida, which I'll explain in a second should probably have a pinkish tone to it, and others like Maine. Really?! What is going on in Maine?

Anyway, before I lay it on too thick about why these states deserve the honor of the Golden Bedpan, let's give a little background.

One of the major victories, if not the most influential health care reform of our time, is the Medicaid Expansion under the Affordable Care Act. For years, uninsured adults

have been excluded from Medicaid coverage, even the poorest of the poor, because they were not a parent of a child, did not have a disability, or were under the age of 65. Health Care Consumers, and organizations like ours around the nation, had to piece together various forms of assistance and ingenuity to help people, sometimes miraculously, get access to the care they needed and deserved.

In less than 6 months, all of that will change. Medicaid will be available for anyone and everyone who has an income below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level, or roughly \$15,400 a year. No more of these arbitrary, exclusionary Medicaid eligibility criteria that have left millions uninsured, including 350,000 people here in Illinois. If you are low-income, you can get Medicaid...simple as that.

That is, as long as you don't happen to live in the half of our country that is rejecting the Medicaid Expansion. Some of these states, like Mississippi, Alaska, Oklahoma, Georgia, and Texas, have the highest number of uninsured people, yet these mental giants turn down an offer from the federal government to pay for 100% of the new Medicaid coverage in their states.

How can we even begin to explain the idiocy behind the leadership who thinks this makes sense? Well, let me try to break it down for you.

Some states refusing the Medicaid expansion say they need a stronger commitment that the federal government will fully fund the Medicaid match before approving an expansion. Really...because states like Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Oklahoma, who have among the lowest Medicaid spending per recipient and repeatedly slash their Medicaid programs, are showing such a strong commitment to their residents. Yeah, that's about as committed as a Kardashian. (No, too young?)

Other states are proposing alternative plans to the federal Medicaid expansion so they have more control and are less reliant on the federal government. Ok...I'm listening. Earlier this week, Florida's Senate voted on an alternative proposal to help pay for insurance for people living in poverty by giving them \$10 a month to buy a private form of Medicaid. Wow, that really would help me buy insurance for me and my family...if we were living in 1913! That is why I said Florida should be a little pink on the map. They can't seem to figure out what they want when the Governor leads the U.S. Supreme Court lawsuit against the Affordable Care Act, then flips and says he wants to expand Medicaid in Florida after the lawsuit fails, but the legislature says no and comes up with brilliant ideas like these instead.

My fantasy about this is that some of these states are holding out for something even better than the ACA and the expansion of Medicaid...like single-payer health insurance or Medicare for all. Well...maybe not, but a girl can dream.

So for continuing to reject the Affordable Care Act, a law that all 3 branches of the federal government supports and upheld, and holding the millions of poor, vulnerable, and uninsured of your state hostage just to save political face, we present CCHCC's 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Golden Bedpan Award to all of the states who are refusing the Medicaid Expansion.

Thank You.

That concludes our awards show presentation, but before we close this evening, and in keeping with tradition, we invite you all sit back, relax and help us remember some good times and fallen comrades.

Thank You.