



Cover Maine Now! Coalition Rally  
Remarks of Sara Gagné-Holmes  
March 21, 2013

Good Morning! It's very exciting to see so many people here today. Welcome.

My name is Sara Gagné-Holmes, and I'm the executive director of Maine Equal Justice Partners and one of the organizers of today's event.

I want to thank The Opportunity Alliance for hosting us today. I also want to thank all of you for joining the Cover Maine Now! Coalition.

It's great to see so many people who are working so hard to make sure 69,500 Mainers can have access to health insurance.

Maine has a tremendous opportunity right now to change lives.

To help families be more secure.

To improve the health of our family, friends, and neighbors.

To boost our economy.

To reduce insurance costs.

To create jobs.

To save lives.

There are very few matters of public policy that can have such a dramatic effect on so many people.

Right now, the Maine Legislature and Gov. LePage are considering whether or not our state should accept federal funding to expand access to health care to 69,500 Mainers.

Rep. Linda Sanborn of Gorham has introduced a bill to make it possible.

Thank you Rep. Sanborn and all of the Democratic, Republican and Independent legislators who have signed on to support this critical legislation.

We will do our best to make sure everyone knows how important this bill is for the health of Maine people and Maine's economy.

The Cover Maine Now! Coalition includes more than 70 organizations and businesses who have come together to support accepting federal funds to expand access to hard-working, low-income Mainers.

We believe that doing so will make thousands of people healthier and more secure while also boosting the state's economy and creating new jobs.

This opportunity is possible because of the Affordable Care Act, which has already set aside money for all states that choose to expand access to health care.

For three years, the federal government will cover 100 percent of the cost of providing health insurance to newly eligible individuals. And then 90 percent of the cost after that.

According to the conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., Maine stands to save more than \$690 million between now and 2022 if we say "yes."

Additionally, research by my organization and the Maine Center for Economic Policy shows that Maine will see:

- Over \$250 million new federal dollars coming to Maine for health care.
- The creation of more than 3,100 jobs.
- Better health care for thousands of people, including 7,000 Maine veterans who would be eligible for coverage.

Beyond the numbers, we cannot forget the faces of the people who would gain access to health care. I can't help but think about one of our clients, who I'll call John. John lives in Augusta with his two children. He works two jobs, but neither offers health insurance. And despite working more than full-time, he can't afford health insurance for himself.

John has a heart condition that required open heart surgery. He needs health insurance to make sure he's around to take care of his family.

He's a working parent, trying to do right by his kids. I don't think Maine can turn its back on John and his family when the federal government is offering a better choice.

There are thousands of stories just like this in Maine today.

Hard-working people, playing by the rules, who are just one illness or accident away from bankruptcy, or worse.

They can't afford preventive screenings and services and they can't go to the doctor when they need to. But we can change it. That's what this coalition is all about!

About making sure that 69,500 Mainers can have a family doctor, can afford to see a doctor when they need to and can live longer, healthier lives.

You can make a difference. And those thousands of people are counting on you to make your voices heard: To call or write your legislator and to get involved.