

PROTECT OUR CARE

ACA At 10: Medicaid Expansion

Ten years after the Affordable Care Act opened the doors for states to expand Medicaid, the results are piling in: Medicaid expansion works. In addition to covering [17 million people](#), expansion has resulted in healthier people, communities and economies.

Research Confirms Medicaid Expansion Has Had Far-Reaching Benefits, Resulting In Better Health Outcomes, Access To Care, And Financial Security For Patients.

Medicaid Saved At Least 19,200 Lives. A report by the Center On Budget And Policy Priorities found that "the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) expansion of Medicaid to low-income adults is preventing thousands of premature deaths each year, a landmark study finds. It saved the lives of at least 19,200 adults aged 55 to 64 over the four-year period from 2014 to 2017. Conversely, 15,600 older adults died prematurely because of state decisions not to expand Medicaid." [Center On Budget And Policy Priorities, [11/6/19](#)]

Medicaid Expansion Led To Coverage Gains For Children. A study in Health Affairs found that "710,000 children gained public coverage when their parents enrolled in Medicaid between 2013 and 2015. If the remaining 19 non-expansion states expanded Medicaid, 200,000 additional children would gain health coverage through existing programs. The effect was largest among children whose parents gained Medicaid eligibility through the expansion." [Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, [1/12/18](#)]

The Chance Of Accruing Medical Debt Is 20 Percent Lower In States That Have Expanded Medicaid. "A survey comparing expansion and non-expansion states finds that the chance of accruing medical debt is 20 percent lower in expansion states. It also finds that Medicaid coverage, by reducing enrollees' unpaid medical bills, improves their credit, leading to lower-interest mortgage, auto, and credit card loans that save them an estimated \$280 per year in interest." [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [10/2/18](#)]

Additionally, Medicaid Expansion Has:

- **Increased access to preventative care, cancer screenings and disease-specific treatment.** Medicaid expansion has helped patients access preventative care, including [colon cancer screenings](#). Expansion also increased [patient access to kidney transplants](#) and made [diabetes medication more affordable](#) for low-income patients. A recent study also showed that patients in expansion states were [less likely to report declining physical and mental health](#).
- **Improved infant & maternal health.** Research from the Georgetown Center for Children and Families found that [Medicaid expansion has helped fill gaps in maternal health coverage](#), leading to healthier mothers and babies. A study published in the American Journal of Public Health found the gains made in reducing infant mortality was more than [50 percent greater in states that expanded Medicaid](#), compared to those that did not.

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- **Reduced racial disparities in health insurance coverage and access to care.** After the implementation of the ACA, gaps in insurance coverage [narrowed the most](#) in states that adopted Medicaid expansion, improving health care access for communities of color across the board.
- **Increased access to substance abuse treatment.** [Study](#) after [study](#) has shown that Medicaid expansion has increased access to addiction treatment. And new research shows that as many as [8,132 people were saved from fatal opioid overdoses](#) as a direct result of Medicaid expansion.
- **Boosted employment for people with disabilities.** A 2018 University of Kansas study found that [people with disabilities are much more likely to be employed](#) in states that have expanded Medicaid coverage. Additionally, the number of people who report not working because of a disability declined in expansion states.
- **Reduced preventable hospitalizations and lowered hospital costs.** Recent research shows that expansion states saw a [reduction in preventable hospitalizations](#) and lower hospital costs. Additionally, a 2018 National Bureau of Economic Research analysis found that Medicaid expansion led to a [nearly \\$6 billion decline in unpaid medical bills](#) and to higher credit scores.

If The Affordable Care Act Is Struck Down, Medicaid Expansion Would Be Eliminated

Despite the increasing disparities between states that chose to expand Medicaid and those that did not, the Trump administration and its Republican allies remain intent on decimating Medicaid expansion and jeopardizing the health of [17 million Americans](#) who depend on Medicaid expansion for coverage.

- **Seventeen Million People Enrolled Through Medicaid Expansion Could Lose Coverage.**
- **Access To Opioid Treatment Would Be In Jeopardy For 800,000 People With Opioid Use Disorder.** [Roughly four in ten](#), or 800,000 people with an opioid use disorder are enrolled in Medicaid. Many became eligible through Medicaid expansion.
- **Key Support For Rural Hospitals Would Disappear**, leaving hospitals with [\\$9.6 billion](#) more in uncompensated care.
- **States Would Lose Important Federal Health Care Funding** — an estimated reduction of \$135 billion in the first year. The Urban Institute estimates that a full repeal of the ACA would [reduce](#) federal spending on Medicaid/CHIP care and Marketplace subsidies by \$135 billion, or 34.6 percent in the first year.