Medicaid Is More Important Than Ever
Nearly 1 in 4 Americans Receive Health Coverage Through Medicaid

April is Medicaid Awareness Month and the past two years have taught us that Medicaid is more important than ever. Medicaid has been proven to increase access to care, improve financial security, and produce better health outcomes. Today, nearly 79 million Americans receive their coverage through Medicaid, firmly establishing Medicaid as a pillar of the American health care system.

Medicaid expansion is essential to ensure every American has quality, affordable health coverage. Despite the overwhelming benefits of Medicaid expansion, Republicans have spent years undermining the ACA and its expansion of Medicaid at every turn, blocking millions from coverage. Yet the program has become increasingly popular among conservative voters. 75 percent of Americans have a favorable view toward the Medicaid program, and 61 percent of Americans in non-expansion states favor expansion. Every time Medicaid expansion has been placed on the ballot, even in deep red states like Oklahoma and Idaho, voters have approved it. An estimated four million uninsured adults could gain coverage if the 12 remaining holdout states adopted Medicaid expansion.

Research confirms that Medicaid expansion saves lives and drastically reduces racial health disparities. States that expanded their Medicaid programs saw a 51 percent reduction in the gap between uninsured white and Black adults after expansion, and a 45 percent reduction between white and Hispanic adults. Medicaid has also served as a lifeline during the pandemic, with research showing expansion states were better positioned to handle the economic fallout from COVID-19. However you approach it, Medicaid is an essential component of American life and more important than ever.

Republicans In 12 States Are Blocking Coverage For Millions

States That Have Not Expanded Medicaid	Number Of Residents Who Could Gain Coverage
Alabama	217,000
Florida	833,000
Georgia	490,000
Kansas	90,000
Mississippi	179,000
North Carolina	404,000
South Carolina	207,000
South Dakota	30,000

Tennessee	256,000
Texas	1,534,000
Wisconsin	87,000
Wyoming	17,000
Total	**4,344,000**

Medicaid Saves Lives

Thousands Of Lives Saved Each Year. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Medicaid expansion saved the lives of 19,200 older adults aged 55 to 64 between 2014 and 2017. At the same time,15,600 older adults died prematurely as a result of their states' decision not to expand the program. A study published in the Journal of Health Economics found that Medicaid expansion reduced mortality in non-elderly adults by nearly four percent.

Medicaid Served As A Lifeline During The Pandemic. Millions of Americans lost their jobs and their health coverage due to COVID-19. Over the course of the pandemic, Medicaid rolls have surged by 14.8 million Americans. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) requires states to provide enrollees with continuous Medicaid coverage until the federal public health emergency (PHE) ends. The federal government has provided additional funding to states during this period to support the increase of enrollees and ensure access to quality health coverage during this health crisis.

Reduced Preventable Diseases And Mortality. While scientific advancements have led to improved prognosis for many diseases, Medicaid expansion has increased access to care and improved disease outcomes. Cancer deaths have dropped more in states that accepted Medicaid coverage under the ACA than in states that have held out, and expansion has also been tied to fewer heart-related deaths.

Medicaid Expands Health Care Access

Medicaid Expansion Leads To Expansion Of Services. 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. The program was also tied to earlier diagnosis of colorectal cancer and reducing diabetes-related amputations.

Improved Access To Primary Care & Family Planning. Two studies from Michigan showed that Medicaid expansion doubled low-income patients' access to primary care and enrollees experienced improved access to birth control and family planning.

Increased Access To Substance Use Treatment. [Study](#) after [study](#) has shown that Medicaid expansion has increased access to addiction treatment and [mental health services](#). Research has shown that as many as [8,132 people were saved from fatal opioid overdoses](#) as a direct result of Medicaid expansion.

Increased Coverage For Children. When parents have health insurance, their children are more likely to be insured. A study in Health Affairs found that [710,000 children](#) gained public coverage as a result of their parents enrolling in Medicaid between 2013 and 2015.

Medicaid Expansion Reduces Racial Disparities In Health Care

Reduced Racial Disparities In Coverage And Access. Increasing Medicaid access is the single most important action available to expand coverage and reduce racial inequities in the American health care system. The ACA led to historic reductions in racial disparities in access to health care, but racial gaps in insurance coverage [narrowed the most](#) in states that adopted Medicaid expansion. States that expanded their Medicaid programs saw a [51 percent](#) reduction in the gap between uninsured white an Black adults after expansion, and a [45 percent](#) reduction between white and Hispanic adults. [60 percent](#) of Americans who would gain coverage if the remaining 12 hold out states expanded Medicaid are people of color.

Medicaid Coverage Is Critical To Improving Maternal Health. The United States is only one of two nations that has reported an [increase in maternal mortality](#) since 2000. Women of color consistently experience higher rates of maternal mortality than white women, with the Center on Budget Policy and Priorities finding this to be the result of a combination of factors, including life-long toxic stress resulting from racism and the impacts of [structural racism in the health care system](#). If post-partum Medicaid coverage was expanded to a full year, more than [720,000](#) individuals would receive quality coverage. In the 12 states that have refused Medicaid expansion, [eight](#) had more than 40 percent of births covered by Medicaid. Medicaid covers [65 percent](#) of all births to Black mothers and [65 percent](#) of women of reproductive age living in the coverage gap are women of color.

Better Access To Care. Medicaid expansion [reduced](#) racial disparities in cancer care and resulted in earlier diagnosis and treatment for Black patients. According to the Center for American Progress, Black women were [more likely](#) to receive care because of the ACA and increased access to Medicaid coverage.

Medicaid Expansion Increases Financial Security

Reduced Income Inequality. A January 2021 [study](#) found that the ACA helped reduce income inequality across the board, but much more dramatically in Medicaid expansion states. The bottom 10th percentile of earners In Medicaid expansion states saw a [22.4 percent](#) boost in

their income, compared to 11.4 percent in non-expansion states. A study in Health Affairs [found](#) that Medicaid Expansion also caused a "significant" reduction in poverty.

Reduced Medical Debt. Access to Medicaid means access to high quality coverage and extremely low cost sharing, without the premiums. As a result, Medicaid eliminates the types of medical costs that can lead to unpaid bills and medical debt. Over the past decade, research has shown the gap in medical debt between Medicaid expansion and holdout states has grown approximately [30 percent](#). In 2020, Americans living in holdout states carried an average of [$375](#) more in medical debt than their counterparts in expansion states.

Boosted Employment. Reports from Ohio and Michigan found that Medicaid expansion [helped](#) enrollees hold down jobs and look for work. Relatedly, a study from the University of Kansas 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.

Medicaid Expansion Is A Lifeline For Rural Hospitals

Medicaid Covers Rural America. [Nearly one in four](#) non-eldery Americans living in rural areas had health coverage through [Medicaid](#). The uninsured rate for low-income adults [dropped from 35 percent to 16 percent](#) in rural areas and small towns in states that expanded Medicaid. Of the 12 holdout states, all have large rural populations who would significantly benefit from expansion.

Key Support For Rural Hospitals. Through lower premiums and expanded Medicaid, there has been a profound reduction in uncompensated care costs, which are often the direct result of individuals who are un-or-underinsured. Compared to 2013, hospitals' uncompensated care costs decreased by more than [$14 billion](#) in 2017, or 26 percent. Medicaid expansion plays a large role in reducing uncompensated care costs. When Louisiana expanded Medicaid in 2016, it experienced a [33 percent reduction](#) in uncompensated care costs as a share of total operating expenses among hospitals, with a 55 percent reduction for rural hospitals.

Medicaid Keeps Rural Hospitals Running. Nearly [140 rural hospitals](#) have closed since 2010, with [hundreds](#) of additional facilities at risk of closing. The vast majority closed in states that had not expanded Medicaid at the time of the hospital closure. Research confirms that expansion increased [rural](#) and [safety-net](#) hospital profit margins. Rural hospitals in Medicaid expansion states are 62 percent less likely to close, and [75 percent](#) of vulnerable rural hospitals are in non-expansion states.