

Medicaid Works For Women

April is [Medicaid Awareness Month](#) and Medicaid is an essential pillar in providing coverage for women. Generations of inequality have resulted in women experiencing high coverage costs, poor health outcomes, and health inequities. As a result, Medicaid coverage remains a critical source of coverage, especially for women of color who experience higher rates of poverty than white women and remain less likely to have access to quality care. For pregnant women, affordable health coverage is essential more than ever as the United States continues to experience the highest rates of maternal mortality among wealthy nations.

Research confirms that Medicaid expansion saves lives and drastically reduces health disparities. States that expanded their Medicaid programs saw millions of women gain coverage. In 2019, [eight](#) states with women's uninsured rates above the national average had not adopted Medicaid expansion. By rejecting expansion, these states are worsening the maternal health crisis and limiting health care access for the women who need it most. Despite Medicaid expansion's proven role in reducing disparities in health care access and improving outcomes, Republicans have spent years undermining the expansion of Medicaid, blocking millions from coverage. Currently, an estimated [four million uninsured adults](#) are locked out of coverage in the 12 [holdout states](#), with [2.2 million](#) trapped in the Medicaid coverage gap. As of 2021, approximately [one million](#) women are in the coverage gap.

By The Numbers

- **Medicaid Covers Over 30 Million Women Nationwide.** [31 million](#) adult women rely on Medicaid for coverage. In 2020, Medicaid covered [16 percent](#) of nonelderly women in the United States. Women comprise the majority of adult Medicaid enrollees.
 - **Medicaid Is A Major Source Of Coverage For Women Of Color.** Due to systemic inequality, women of color are [disproportionately](#) likely to be covered by Medicaid. Nearly 33 percent of Black Americans, 30 percent of Hispanic or Latino individuals, nearly 15 percent of Asian and Pacific Islanders, and 34 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals are enrolled in Medicaid, compared with 15 percent of white individuals.
 - **Medicaid Covers Nearly Half Of Women With Disabilities.** Medicaid covers more than [44 percent](#) of nonelderly women with mental and physical disabilities. As of 2019, Medicaid was the source of health coverage for [one in four](#) American women with mental illness.
 - **Most Women On Medicaid Are Working.** According to Kaiser Family Foundation, the vast majority of women enrolled in Medicaid work, including mothers on Medicaid. In 2019, [93 percent](#) of women enrolled in Medicaid were either working, going to school, at home caring for young children or relatives, or experiencing an illness or disability that does not permit them to work.
 - **More Than 4 Million People Would Gain Coverage If Remaining States Expanded Medicaid.** Over [four million](#) people would gain Medicaid coverage if the remaining states implemented expansion, including 2.2 million trapped in the Medicaid coverage gap.
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Medicaid Is The Largest Payer Of Reproductive Health Care Coverage. Medicaid covers about [one in five women](#) of reproductive age, giving them access to reproductive health care services such as birth control, cancer screenings, and maternity care without cost-sharing. [Two thirds](#) of women enrolled in Medicaid are of reproductive age, with Medicaid accounting for [75 percent](#) of all public expenditures on family planning services.

- **Expanding Access To Care At Every Stage.** There is an urgent need for quality, affordable health coverage prior to, during, and after giving birth. While [48 percent](#) of maternal deaths occur during pregnancy and delivery, more than half, [52 percent](#), occur in the year following the birth of a child. [12 percent](#) of maternal deaths are deemed 'late', occurring between six weeks and one year following delivery, demonstrating the immense need for continuous health access and coverage for a minimum of one year following the birth of a child. The Biden administration has established a pathway to coverage, providing states the opportunity to extend [postpartum coverage](#) under Medicaid from 60 days to 12 months following birth. Currently, [four states](#) have begun offering continuous Medicaid or CHIP coverage for 12 months after pregnancy and an additional 11 states and the District of Columbia are working to expand coverage.
- **More Than Four In 10 Births Are Covered By Medicaid.** In 2020, [42 percent](#) of births were financed by Medicaid, with 40 percent or more births covered by the program in [24 states](#) and the District of Columbia. Rates varied across the nation, with [61 percent](#) of births financed by Medicaid in Louisiana, and 22 percent in Utah. 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.
- **Expanding Medicaid & Closing The Coverage Gap Is Critical To Improving Maternal Health.** 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 in every state, more than [720,000](#) individuals would receive quality coverage. [65 percent](#) of women of reproductive age living in the coverage gap are women of color.
- **Medicaid Expansion Improved Access To Primary Care & Family Planning.** Two studies from Michigan showed that Medicaid expansion [doubled](#) low-income patients' access to primary care, and that enrollees experienced [improved](#) access to birth control and family planning.

Medicaid Improves Access To Care For Women. Women with Medicaid are far more likely to receive care than uninsured women. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, women with Medicaid coverage are [less likely](#) than women with private insurance to report delaying or

forgoing care due to cost. Women with Medicaid coverage receive preventive care at roughly the same rates as women with private coverage and at a higher rate than women without insurance.

Medicaid Helps Pay For Long-Term Care, Mostly For Elderly Women. Medicaid pays for roughly half of the nation's long-term services and supports. In 2020, women accounted for [61 percent](#) of the 12.3 million dual-eligibles, or people who rely on both Medicare and Medicaid for coverage. Most dual-eligibles are elderly, and many need Medicaid coverage for their long-term care needs. Medicaid covers [nearly 40 percent](#) of Latina and Black women over 65 who are also covered by Medicare.

Medicaid Creates Jobs In The Health Industry, Which Is Overwhelmingly Female. Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that there are 15.5 million frontline health care workers – [77 percent](#) of which are women – establishing Medicaid as a major job creator for women.