

Expand Medicaid, Not Work Requirements

Medicaid is a joint federal-state program that provides health insurance to individuals and families with low incomes, including children, pregnant people, older adults and people with disabilities. The goal of Medicaid is to provide care and reduce medical expenses for the person and the nation.

As part of the Affordable Care Act, states are allowed to expand Medicaid to cover individuals with incomes up to 138% of the poverty line. Forty-one states have done so, but 10 have not. In states that have not yet expanded Medicaid – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming – there are ongoing discussions about incorporating work requirements into their expansion plans.⁷

Expanding Medicaid helps individuals and families to:

- ✓ Access both short and long-term health care coverage and necessary health services.
- ✓ Be healthier and have improved health outcomes¹⁴
- ✓ Increase financial stability¹

Medicaid reduces poverty more successfully than any other type of health insurance!¹⁵

What are Work Requirements?

Medicaid work requirements require some adults who are eligible for Medicaid to be engaged in work or work-related activities for a specified number of hours each month in order to maintain their Medicaid eligibility.³

Policymakers are considering increasing work requirements within Medicaid or within Medicaid expansion.⁶

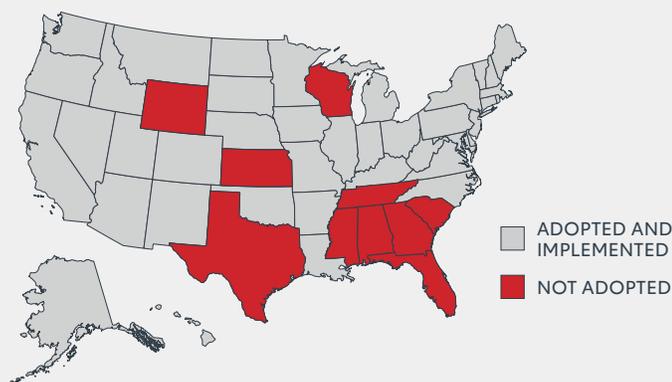
This would keep eligible people from accessing health insurance coverage.

According to research, adding work requirements would likely contribute to an increase in unemployment, worsen health and exacerbate poverty.¹

Most Medicaid beneficiaries are already working, but the work comes with low wages and no benefits.

Participants that are not working face significant barriers to employment such as transportation challenges or caregiving responsibilities.^{4,5}

Medicaid Expansion by State



10 states have *not* expanded Medicaid.

States that expand Medicaid (after March 2021) can receive additional funding from the federal government.²

If the remaining non-expansion states adopted Medicaid expansion, they could collectively receive approximately \$13.1 billion in federal funding and extend health insurance access to an additional 1.5 million people.¹⁶

States that have expanded Medicaid are experiencing the following benefits:

- ▶ More revenue from taxes on private health plans and providers
- ▶ Less spending on federal programs
- ▶ Lower rates of uninsured people²

Imposing Work Requirements Could Harm Health and Increase Poverty.

1 Work requirements cost money and do not lead to steady employment

- ▶ When examining programs with work requirements, the Congressional Budget Office found that even when work requirements increase employment, it was only a short term effect with some programs showing no increase at all.⁶
- ▶ Work requirement programs are costly to administer and burdensome for participants, staff, and government agencies.¹

2 Work requirements reduce access to health care and health-promoting programs

- ▶ Many beneficiaries who were disenrolled from Medicaid due to work requirements did not subsequently obtain health insurance from employment but instead became uninsured.^{9,10}
- ▶ Loss of health care coverage for those who are not working are mostly contending with physical and mental health challenges or caregiving responsibilities that work requirements will not address.^{4,5}

3 Work requirements drive individuals and families already struggling to make ends meet into deeper poverty.

- ▶ An analysis of state Medicaid work requirements before their withdrawal by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services revealed that beneficiaries faced adverse health outcomes such as difficulties in paying off medical debt, delayed care due to cost, and postponed medication use due to cost.¹¹
- ▶ Research suggests that individuals likely to be disenrolled from Medicaid would not lose coverage due to failing to meet work requirements, but rather because of their inability to consistently navigate onerous administrative processes.^{4,5,12,13}

This content was created with Katie Horton and her team in the Department of Health Policy and Management at George Washington University.

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