MEDICAID EXPANSION: IMPROVING ACCESS & STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY HEALTH

A policy solution that reduces health disparities and increases affordable, consistent care for vulnerable populations.



Medicaid expansion closes the coverage gap for adults who cannot afford private insurance but do not qualify for traditional Medicaid.

Without expansion, many individuals delay or skip care because of cost, which increases preventable complications and emergency department use. Expanding Medicaid supports earlier treatment, chronic disease management, and healthier long-term outcomes.

WHY MEDICAID EXPANSION IS NECESSARY

Benefits:

- Access Care Earlier
- Lower Health Costs
- Stronger Communities



Nurses play a key role in advancing healthcare equity. Based on available evidence, nursing professionals recommend:

- Expanding Medicaid in all remaining non-expansion states
- Increasing provider reimbursement to ensure adequate access
- Strengthening behavioral health coverage for mental health and substance use services
- Improving public outreach and education to help eligible individuals enroll

Dranove, D., Garthwaite, C., Ody, C., & Starc, A. (2021). Uncompensated care decreased at hospitals in Medicaid expansion states. Health Affairs, 40(1), 79–86.

KEY EVIDENCE & DATA

- States that expanded Medicaid saw large reductions in uninsured low-income adults (HFF, 2025).
- Earlier cancer detection and improved chronic disease control were documented in expansion states (Sommers et al., 2022).
- Hospitals reported major decreases in uncompensated care, strengthening financial stability (Dranove et al., 2021).
- Access to mental health and substance treatment improved significantly.



These outcomes show expansion is associated with better health, lower financial strain, and stronger communities.

Sommers, B. D., Berry, C., & Blendon, R. J. (2022). NEJM, 386(2), 154–163.