

Early State Trends Signal Massive Surge in Medicaid Enrollment Related to COVID-19

As the COVID-19 crisis worsens, the role of Medicaid as the nation's health coverage safety net is becoming clearer. With tens of millions of people losing employer-based health insurance, covering the uninsured is an urgent priority. The Medicaid program — especially in states that have implemented Medicaid expansion for low-income adults — stands readily available to provide comprehensive coverage to those who need it.

According to a new analysis by Families USA, in April and May, states began to experience dramatic increases in Medicaid enrollment. While Medicaid is a very efficient coverage option for states, Medicaid enrollment increases of the magnitude documented in this analysis are already causing a significant strain on state resources. This is important context as Congress considers additional proposals that would provide a significant increase in federal matching rates for Medicaid and other flexible funding to relieve some of the pressure on state budgets.

Early State-by-State Medicaid Enrollment Trends

The Families USA analysis below compiles some of the earliest and most complete Medicaid enrollment data since the pandemic began.¹ This analysis shows dramatic early enrollment surges in states with data reported for March 2020. As of May 15, 2020, at least 28 states publicly reported Medicaid enrollment data through March 2020 or later months. The analysis compares states' March, April, and May enrollment levels against their January enrollment levels. Findings

show enrollment increases beginning in March or April and then rapidly accelerating. Most states saw modest or no enrollment growth from January to March (0% to 3%), significant increases from January to April (0% to 6%), and massive increases from January to May for those states that have reported (3% to 10%).

As a point of comparison, Families USA also analyzed all states based on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) monthly enrollment data between January 2019 and May 2019. During that time, a calmer economic period, only two states exceeded 2% growth (Idaho at 2.39% and Vermont at 2.34%), and nearly every other state remained relatively static.²

Budgets in all 50 states and the District of Columbia will be hit hard by COVID-19, especially as it relates to the Medicaid program. The data highlighted in Figure 1 portend an emerging trend in state Medicaid enrollment and provide tremendous analytical support to states requesting federal support to help them weather this storm.

Figure 1. Medicaid Enrollment Change since January 2020

	January to March 2020 (Percentage Change)	January to April 2020 (Percentage Change)	January to May 2020 (Percentage Change)
Arizona	-0.10%	2.18%	4.04%
Arkansas	-0.47%	-0.19%	-
Colorado	-0.73%	-	-
Connecticut*	-0.25%	1.40%	-
Florida	-0.11%	-	-
Illinois*	1.22%	2.30%	-
Indiana	2.25%	-	-
Iowa*	-0.10%	1.95%	4.32%
Kansas	0.46%	-	-
Kentucky	0.33%	4.16%	8.05%
Michigan	1.10%	2.08%	-
Minnesota*	2.69%	6.46%	10.33%
Missouri	1.75%	-	-
New Hampshire	0.23%	4.46%	-
New Jersey	-0.12%	-	-
New Mexico	0.14%	-	-
New York*	0.06%	1.61%	-
North Carolina	0.00%	1.87%	3.55%
Ohio	0.48%	-	-
Oklahoma	3.34%	-	-
Oregon*	0.65%	2.57%	-
South Dakota**	-0.05%	-	-
Tennessee	-0.08%	-	-
Utah	0.84%	5.86% ³	-
Virginia	1.19%	2.44%	5.86%
Washington*	0.31%	1.35%	-
West Virginia	0.62%	2.26%	-
Wisconsin	0.48%	4.70%	-

*Managed care or Oregon's Coordinated Care Organization enrollment data. Figures do not include fee-for-service enrollment data.

**The state refers to the data as "eligibility data." It is unclear if this is different than enrollment data.

Endnotes

¹ The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) provides comprehensive state-by-state Medicaid enrollment data. Unfortunately, that data typically isn't available to the public for three or four months. In order to analyze more recent data, Families USA relied on state-reported enrollment data.

² The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services data used for the Families USA analysis can be found here: <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/national-medicaid-chip-program-information/medicaid-chip-enrollment-data/monthly-medicaid-chip-application-eligibility-determination-and-enrollment-reports-data/index.html>.

³ This information was shared with certain stakeholders ahead of the May 21, 2020, meeting of the Utah Medical Care Advisory Committee. Meeting minutes will be posted here: <https://medicaid.utah.gov/mcac/2020minutes/>.

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