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Interested Parties



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MEDICAID EXPANSION: TRIBAL IMPACT REPORT

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DAKOTANS FOR HEALTH

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INDIAN COUNTRY

If we collect enough signatures to qualify our ballot measure, South Dakota voters will decide on November 8 whether the “Coyote State” will adopt the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) Medicaid expansion, which would improve access to health care for 42,500 South Dakotans — including thousands of American Indians (AI). The ballot initiative comes at an important time: expanding coverage and improving access to healthcare for AI people is especially crucial now, since COVID-19 has hit them particularly hard.

IMPACT*

MEDICAID EXPANSION AND TRIBAL HEALTH FACILITIES:

1. Reduces share of uninsured patients at IHS facilities
2. Increased access to care on and off tribal land
3. Coverage gains boost revenue at IHS facilities
4. Increased revenue improves quality of care

AI people face persistent health disparities, including a higher uninsurance rate, more barriers to accessing care, and significantly greater physical and mental health needs than other groups. Like many other groups, however, AI people have benefited greatly from the ACA’s coverage expansions. From 2013 to 2018, the AI uninsured rate fell by nearly one-third, from [28 percent](#) to [20 percent](#).

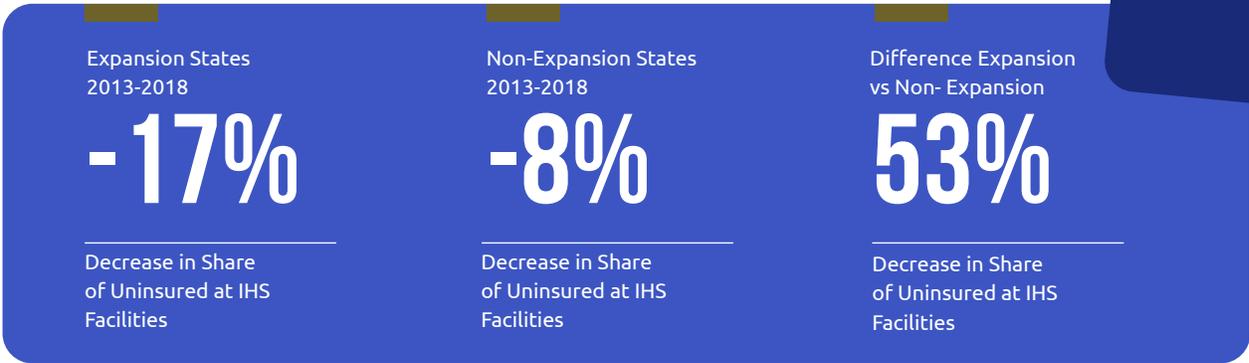
Not surprisingly, Medicaid expansion states have seen larger health coverage gains than non-expansion states. During this same time period, the share of uninsured patients at Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities fell by 17 percentage points in expansion states, compared to 8 percentage points in non-expansion states, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) [study found](#).

By expanding Medicaid — which has been linked nationally to [life-saving health benefits](#) — South Dakota will take the next step in narrowing health disparities for their AI populations.

**Information provided courtesy of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities*

ACCESS TO CARE

“MEDICAID EXPANSION STATES HAVE SEEN LARGER HEALTH COVERAGE GAINS THAN NON-EXPANSION STATES. DURING THIS SAME TIME PERIOD, THE SHARE OF UNINSURED PATIENTS AT INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS) FACILITIES FELL BY 17 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN EXPANSION STATES, COMPARED TO 8 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN NON-EXPANSION STATES. — Center for Budget Policy Priorities



While AI people are entitled to care at IHS or tribal facilities regardless of whether they have health insurance, coverage gains boost their access to care in two ways:

First, health insurance makes it easier for people to access care from other providers when IHS facilities are geographically inaccessible or oversubscribed or when individuals simply prefer another provider.

Second, coverage gains among IHS or tribal facilities’ patients boost these facilities’ revenue. IHS is chronically underfunded, and it relies on Medicaid and other third parties to help cover the costs of care it provides to AI/AN people.

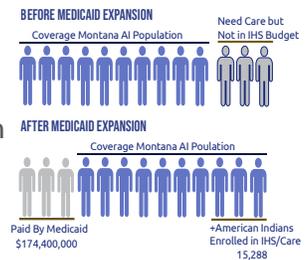
To illustrate how this might impact South Dakota it is helpful to consider the impact

MONTANA IMPACT

of Medicaid expansion to neighboring Montana’s American Indian population.

According to the Montana Department of

Public Health and Human Services, between 2016-2018, Medicaid expansion enrolled 15,288 tribal members generating as much as \$174,400,000 in additional healthcare spending. On the Blackfeet Reservation, for example, tribal and IHS run facilities saw an additional **\$13.6 million dollars** for services reimbursed by the federal government during that period of time alone.



HEALTH OUTCOMES

“ IN THE SPRING OF 2018 IHS TOLD THE STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT THAT BECAUSE OF AN INCREASE IN REVENUE FROM TREATING PEOPLE COVERED UNDER MEDICAID EXPANSION, ALL ITS FACILITIES IN MONTANA HAD MOVED TO OPERATING AT A LEVEL 4. — Helena Independent Record

The additional revenue from Medicaid expansion generally helps IHS facilities improve access to care for AI people by expanding onsite services; adding new specialty and preventative care services, like behavioral health, orthopedics, and dental care; reducing appointment wait times; and buying life-saving medical equipment. Including:



MAMOGRAMS

Diagnosing breast cancer earlier to improve health outcomes.



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Improving the availability of mental health services and addiction treatment.



DENTAL CARE

Improving access to annual checkups, cleanings and root canals.



COLONOSCOPIES

Diagnosing colon cancer earlier to improve health outcomes.



DIABETES TREATMENT

Preventing complications such as kidney failure and dialysis in the future.



HEALTH OUTCOMES+

Making Indian Country healthier and more prosperous.

Expanding coverage and improving access to health care are important goals under any circumstances, but they're especially important during a pandemic. Although Medicaid expansion alone won't solve the challenges created by inadequate federal funding, poverty, discrimination, and other forces, South Dakota will make MAJOR improvements in health coverage and access to care by qualifying and passing Medicaid expansion via ballot measure in 2022, but [we need your help](#).



“ THE WORK OF EXPANDING
MEDICAID IS CRITICAL TO THE
LONG TERM SUCCESS OF INDIAN
COUNTRY AND I WOULD LIKE TO
THANK DAKOTANS FOR HEALTH
FOR TAKING IT ON. PEOPLES LIVES
LITERALLY DEPEND ON IT...

— Chairman Robert Flying Hawk



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