



Medicaid Expansion is Good for Children

The new health care law expands the Medicaid program to provide healthcare for millions of uninsured individuals, primarily parents and low-income adults. The Supreme Court ruled in June that states can choose whether or not to accept the Medicaid expansion. An expansion would allow many low-income uninsured adults eligible for Medicaid or for subsidized health coverage through the new health benefit exchange. Low-income children, even if they are already eligible for Medicaid, have much to gain if South Carolina expands its Medicaid program to cover their parents. Getting kids insured makes them healthier. For some, it can change their lives.

Here's what the research shows about why expanding Medicaid to cover low-income parents is important for South Carolina's children:

- Expanding Medicaid to cover parents means that more eligible children will enroll. Children who are eligible for health insurance are **three times more likely to enroll** if their parents also have insurance. Previous expansions of Medicaid coverage for parents have led to a significant increase in enrollment of eligible children and a drop in the number of uninsured children.
 - Expanding Medicaid to cover parents means that children are more likely to *stay* enrolled. Studies have found that covering parents makes it less likely that children have breaks in their own Medicaid coverage.
 - Expanding Medicaid to cover parents makes it more likely that children will receive needed preventive care and other health care services. Studies have found that insured children whose parents are also insured are more likely to receive check-ups and other care, compared to insured children whose parents are uninsured.
 - Parents' health can affect children's health and well-being. The Institute of Medicine has reported that a parents' poor physical or mental health can contribute to a stressful family environment that may impair the health and well-being of a child. Moreover, uninsured parents who can't get care may be unable to work or may end up with big medical bills. In either case, the financial consequences have a big impact on children even if the children receive coverage.
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