While Medicaid expansion was created to provide uninsured adults access to health coverage, it greatly benefits children too. Expansion has been shown to increase kids’ coverage, improve children’s health, and foster families’ economic stability – helping children thrive both now and in the future. Moreover, other states have shown that expansion does not require cutting other programs or raising taxes.¹

When Parents Gain Coverage, Children Do Too

- In 2008, 10,000 low-income adults were randomly selected from a lottery and given an opportunity to apply for Medicaid coverage.² Even though children’s eligibility for Medicaid remained the same, a recent study showed that for every nine adults who gained coverage through this lottery, one child became insured as well.³

- Other studies have found similar trends. While Medicaid expansion doesn’t change children’s eligibility for health coverage, research shows that when coverage is extended to adults, children are more likely to be enrolled as well – even though those children were already eligible.⁴

Medicaid Expansion Can Improve Children’s Health

- Many low-income women do not have access to health coverage until they become pregnant. Medicaid expansion helps women manage chronic conditions and access other care prior to conception, increasing their likelihood of accessing health screenings and taking prenatal supplements like folic acid.⁵

- States that have expanded Medicaid saw a 50% greater reduction in infant mortality and reduced rates of maternal death compared to non-expansion states. When we ensure moms are supported with high-quality health care before, during and after pregnancy, we can help ensure a healthier start for our children.⁶

- What’s more, when parents gain health coverage, their children are more likely to access well-child visits, where they receive immunizations and critical developmental screenings.⁷

Medicaid Expansion Improves Financial Security, Helping Families Thrive

- Medicaid expansion has been shown to reduce the size of medical debt, the proportion of families with such debt, and the likelihood that medical bills go to collections. Similarly, expansion improved credit scores and reduced evictions.⁸

- By reducing economic stress, Medicaid expansion protects children and families from the adverse childhood experiences that stem from financial instability.

ii. This paper was revised on 4/16/21 to demonstrate the number of adults included in the study.


vii. Maya Venkataramani et al., “Spillover Effects of Adult Medicaid Expansions on Children’s Use of Preventive Services,” [Pediatrics](https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/140/6/e20170953), December 2017, [https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/140/6/e20170953](https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/140/6/e20170953).