



Medicaid Expansion FAQs

What is Medicaid expansion?

Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that provides health coverage to low income individuals. Medicaid expansion increases the number of people who are eligible for health insurance coverage under the program.

Who qualifies for Medicaid?

Currently, only individuals in Wyoming who are considered low or very low income *and* who meet criteria based on family status, age, and health qualify for Medicaid benefits. Under Medicaid expansion, eligibility is determined by *income alone*. So, anyone who earns less than a certain amount becomes eligible.

Who in Wyoming would benefit from expanding Medicaid?

In short, low-income workers. Recent estimates project that 24,000 Wyoming residents would qualify for Medicaid as a result of expansion. Nearly 70 percent of these individuals are currently employed, and work in industries such as food service, cleaning and maintenance, transportation, and construction. The vast majority of these people are women.

How would Medicaid expansion be paid for?

The federal government pays for 90 percent of the cost of Medicaid expansion. The state of Wyoming is responsible for the remaining 10 percent. However, the 2021 federal COVID-19 relief package, the American Rescue Plan, includes additional incentive funding for states that have not expanded Medicaid, like Wyoming, to do so. Wyoming would receive an additional estimated \$54 million to update its program.

How does Wyoming's economy benefit?

Medicaid expansion drives down healthcare costs across the board. Healthy workers are more productive and take fewer sick days. New businesses are encouraged to come to the state since healthcare costs for employees decrease. The influx of funding to our medical facilities stimulates growth in the healthcare sector and spreads outward.

How does Wyoming's healthcare system benefit?

Medicaid expansion reduces uncompensated care costs throughout the state, lowering healthcare costs for everyone. This particularly benefits rural hospitals, which face larger uncompensated care costs.

Once we are in, can we get out?

Yes, any state may leave the Medicaid expansion program at any time without penalty.

What other states have expanded Medicaid?

Currently, 38 states have expanded Medicaid, including all of Wyoming's neighbors.

Why hasn't Wyoming expanded Medicaid yet?

Medicaid expansion has become a deeply polarizing issue. Other "red" states that have expanded Medicaid have done so only after broad, sustained grassroots movements demanded it. Wyoming legislators have yet to recognize that people are suffering and dying for lack of healthcare. We must take bigger and stronger actions until they hear us.