

Survey finds Medicaid enrollees satisfied with coverage, physician access

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Enrollees in Medicaid reported in a nationwide survey that they're largely satisfied with the health care they receive under the program, according to researchers at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Most Medicaid enrollees said that they have good access to physicians, while few reported any barriers to accessing care due to their Medicaid insurance.

The findings, which will be published online July 10, 2017 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, come as some policymakers have argued that Medicaid is a broken program that doesn't provide enrollees with adequate access to medical care. By contrast, the new findings suggest that Medicaid is a popular program that meets the needs of the vast majority of enrollees.

"The debate on the future of Medicaid has largely marginalized a crucial voice: the perspective of enrollees. Our findings confirm that Medicaid programs are fulfilling their mission to provide access to necessary medical care," said Michael Barnett, assistant professor of [health](#) policy and management at Harvard Chan School. Benjamin

Sommers, associate professor of health policy and economics, co-authored the study.

Under the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid—a federally funded, state-administered health insurance program for low-income individuals—was expanded in 31 states and D.C., providing new coverage to millions of Americans.

The Harvard Chan researchers analyzed data from the first-ever National Medicaid Consumer Assessment of Health Providers and System (CAHPS) survey, which was aimed at assessing people's experiences with Medicaid. More than 270,000 people responded to the survey, which was administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services from December 2014 to July 2015 to Medicaid enrollees in 46 U.S. states, some of which expanded Medicaid under the ACA and some of which didn't.

The researchers produced nationally representative estimates of Medicaid enrollees' satisfaction with the program. Findings included:

- On a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 representing "the worst [health care](#) possible" and 10 representing "the best health care possible," respondents gave their overall health care an average rating of 7.9
- 84% of enrollees reported that they'd been able to get all the care that they or their physician believed was necessary in the past six months
- 83% reported having a usual source of care
- Only 3% reported not being able to get care because of waiting times or physicians not accepting their insurance

Satisfaction with Medicaid was high both in states that expanded Medicaid and in those that didn't, as well as across all demographic groups, the authors found.

More information: "What Enrollees Think of Medicaid: Results From A National Survey of Patient Satisfaction," Michael L. Barnett, Benjamin D. Sommers, *JAMA Internal Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.3174](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.3174)

Provided by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

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