

# More former inmates getting Medicaid under Obamacare, study finds

December 8 2015

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Researchers suggest it might lower number of repeat offenders.

(HealthDay)—A growing number of former inmates are getting Medicaid coverage, which benefits both them and society, a new report suggests.

The expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) means that low-income men can now get [health coverage](#).

This study found that in one year, a small number of programs designed to ease Medicaid enrollment helped more than 112,000 people newly released from prison or jail—mostly men—get coverage previously not available to them.

"Typically, men who have serious health conditions ranging from schizophrenia to heart disease to diabetes who received medication while

in prison or jail are released with as little as a week or two supply of medication and no access to a doctor," said study leader Colleen Barry. She is a professor of health policy and management at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

"Now, depending on where they live, many are qualifying for health insurance through Medicaid as they leave jail or prison. We found that a handful of innovative programs have been created to enroll people in Medicaid and connect them with medical care upon release," she said in a Hopkins news release.

If such programs are expanded to more parts of the United States, even more former inmates will have access to health care. Not only would that improve their well-being, but research suggests it may reduce their risk of re-offending, the Hopkins researchers said.

Currently, only 30 states and the District of Columbia have expanded Medicaid eligibility. And most jurisdictions in those locations do not have other programs to help newly released inmates get coverage, according to the authors of the study published Dec. 7 in the journal *Health Affairs*.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has more about [Medicaid eligibility](#).

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Citation: More former inmates getting Medicaid under Obamacare, study finds (2015, December 8) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-12-inmates-medicaid-obamacare.html>

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