

States with medical marijuana laws see drop in prescriptions

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(HealthDay)—Medical marijuana laws are associated with a decline in

the number of prescriptions filled for Medicaid enrollees, according to a study published in the April issue of *Health Affairs*.

Ashley C. Bradford and W. David Bradford, Ph.D., both from the University of Georgia in Athens, analyzed quarterly data on all fee-for-service Medicaid prescriptions from 2007 to 2014 to assess the association between medical marijuana laws and the average number of prescriptions filled by Medicaid beneficiaries.

The researchers found that the use of prescription drugs in fee-for-service Medicaid was lower in states with medical marijuana laws than in states without such laws in five of the nine broad clinical areas examined. They estimated that if all states had had a medical marijuana law in 2014, fee-for-service Medicaid could have saved \$1.01 billion. These results are similar to those from a previous study examining the effects of medical marijuana laws on the number of prescriptions filled in the Medicare population.

"Our findings on Medicaid prescribing behavior and estimated savings associated with [medical marijuana laws](#), along with our previous results for Medicare enrollees, suggest that patients and physicians in the community are reacting to the availability of medical marijuana as if it were medicine," conclude the authors.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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