

ACA's medicaid expansion may have lowered heart disease deaths

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(HealthDay)—New research supports the notion that Obamacare has

improved the health of Americans: State expansions in Medicaid appear to have cut the number of deaths from heart disease.

Counties in states with expanded Medicaid experienced an average of four fewer deaths from [heart disease](#) per 100,000 people than states that didn't accept the expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

In real terms, that's about 2,000 fewer deaths a year among middle-aged adults.

"We believe these findings will be helpful for policymakers and health policy researchers in trying to tease out the impact of this most recent round of expansion," said researcher Dr. Sameed Khatana, a cardiovascular medicine fellow at the University of Pennsylvania.

"We can't necessarily say from our study that giving a person health insurance through Medicaid will save their life," Khatana said in a university news release. The research only found an association rather than a cause-and-effect link.

"However, our study does show that at a [population level](#), expanding Medicaid was associated with a reduction in deaths from [cardiovascular disease](#). This was especially prominent in areas with a higher number of residents living in poverty and those areas that had greater increases in [insurance coverage](#)," he said.

For the study, Khatana and his colleagues used data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to look at county rates of heart disease deaths from 2010 to 2016 in 29 states with expanded Medicaid and 19 states without it.

They found that deaths from heart disease remained stable in states with expanded Medicaid. In states without added Medicaid, however, heart disease deaths climbed from 176 per 100,000 to nearly 181.

In addition, the largest increases in heart disease deaths were in counties with the smallest increases in insurance between 2010 and 2016.

The report was published online June 5 in the journal *JAMA Cardiology*.

More information: The American Heart Association offers more information on types of [heart disease](#).

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