

Medicaid expansion buffered health coverage loss during pandemic

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Unemployment-related health insurance coverage loss during COVID-19

was higher in states without Medicaid enrollment, whereas Medicaid enrollment occurred more often in Medicaid expansion states, according to a study published online June 17 in *JAMA Health Forum*.

Joseph Benitez, Ph.D., from the University of Kentucky in Lexington, compared changes in health insurance coverage status associated with pandemic-related unemployment among adults who were employed at baseline during calendar years 2019 to 2020. The [cohort](#) included 16,231 adults (mean age, 46.8 years) with new unemployment experienced during 2020.

Benitez found that new unemployment was associated with a 2.9 and 10.7 percent increase in the proportion of uninsured adults in Medicaid expansion [states](#) and nonexpansion states, respectively. Compared with [workers](#) experiencing job loss in nonexpansion states, workers who lived in Medicaid expansion states were 5.4 percent more likely to enroll in Medicaid after a job loss.

"The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented risks for becoming uninsured among working adults," Benitez writes. "Leveraging a longitudinal database allowed monitoring of transitions in health insurance coverage status and source among working adults before and during the pandemic."

More information: Joseph Benitez, Comparison of Unemployment-Related Health Insurance Coverage Changes in Medicaid Expansion vs Nonexpansion States During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Health Forum* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2022.1632](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamahealthforum.2022.1632)

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