

Medicaid expansion may improve childhood cancer survival

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Medicaid expansion may improve outcomes for children with cancer, finds a new analysis from the Brown School and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Researchers found there was a 1.5% increase in overall survival of children with cancer after 2014 in states that expanded access to Medicaid compared with states that did not.

"While 1.5% may not seem like much, we often frame it in terms of number of individual lives who are saved as a result of the program," said Kimberly Johnson, associate professor at the Brown School and co-senior author of the paper. Titled "The association of Medicaid expansion and [pediatric cancer](#) overall survival," the paper was published Feb. 14 in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

"Although the relative increase was small, it translates to an additional 200 children alive at two years following their [cancer diagnosis](#)," the authors wrote.

Johnson and her co-authors, including lead author Justin Barnes, MD, a resident in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the School of Medicine, analyzed data for children ages birth through 14 years diagnosed with cancer from 2011 to 2018 from 40 states as part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's National Program of Cancer Registries.

A total of 46,850 children were included. For all cancers combined, there was a statistically significant increase in the two-year survival rate of 1.5% in states that expanded Medicaid versus those that did not.

"I strongly believe that all children and adolescents should have access to [affordable health care](#), and our analysis shows that Medicaid expansion helps children with cancer," Johnson said. "Childhood [cancer](#) is a tragic and unexpected diagnosis for families; each child that is saved through consistent access to high-quality health care is important and can save hundreds of hearts in families from breaking."

More information: Justin M Barnes et al, The association of Medicaid expansion and pediatric cancer overall survival, *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/jnci/djad024](https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djad024)

Provided by Washington University in St. Louis

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