Medicaid Expansion’s Importance to Mental Health Care

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Cameron Blazoski, Vittorio Maio*
Introduction & Objective

- Medicaid Expansion:
  - Implemented: 39 states + D.C.
  - Process of implementing: 2 states
  - Not adopted: 12 states

- Current research:
  - Medicaid Expansion:
    - → Decreased uninsured rate
    - → Improved access, self-reported health, & health outcomes
  - Lacking data:
    - Medicaid Expansion & mental health

Introduction & Objective

- One in five U.S. adults lives with a mental health disorder (MHD)\textsuperscript{4}
  - 2019: 51.5 million

- >50% of Americans with a MHD do not receive treatment\textsuperscript{5}

From Mental Health Information. National Institute of Mental Health. 
Introduction & Objective

What is the impact of Medicaid Expansion on mental health care?

• Hypothesis: Medicaid Expansion will lead to...
  • → Improved access
  • → Improved outcomes
Methods

• Study population
  • Individuals w/ MHDs/SUDs in expansion states vs. non-expansion states

• Target population & stakeholders:
  • Anyone involved in mental health care debate
    • Politicians
    • Federal government administrators
    • State government administrators
    • Governors of non-expansion states
    • Governors of expansion states
    • Mental health advocacy organizations
Methods

• Data collection, review, analysis, and commentary
  • 1. Data collection
    • Systematic search in Google Scholar
  • 2. Data analysis
  • 3. Political analysis
    • State of Medicaid Expansion
    • State of ACA
    • Current events + news
Methods

- Research on Access:
  - Insurance rate
  - Treatment rates
  - Data sources:
    - Publications - Health Affairs, Psychiatry Services, etc.
    - Government publications - SAMHSA, NIH

- Research on Outcomes
  - Self-reported measures
  - State-level data
  - Data sources:
    - Publications - Health Affairs, Psychiatry Services, etc.

- Mental Health National Statistics
  - Comparing expansion states vs. non-expansion states

Results: Access to Care

Medicaid expansion was associated with:

- Increase **insurance rate** among individuals with MHDs/SUDs
- Increased **treatment rates**
  - Increased outpatient visits
  - Increased medications


Medicaid Expansion  ➔ Improved access to mental health care
Results: Mental Health Outcomes

Medicaid expansion was associated with...

- Self-reported mental health
  - Less poor mental health days\(^7\)
  - Less likely to report declines in mental health\(^8\)

- Higher quality of life

Medicaid Expansion ➔ Improved mental health outcomes
There is a **pattern** among states that perform **poorly** in mental health rankings and their expansion status (and political leaning).
Conclusions

Medicaid Expansion has improved access to mental health care and mental health-related outcomes, and further expansion would aid individuals with MHDs & SUDs in non-expansion states.

*Especially in light of COVID-19*
Conclusions

- Limitations:
  - Limited data
  - Federal vs. state statistics

- Possible improvements & scope:
  - Narrow scope - more SUD statistics than MHD

- Next steps:
  - Wait on future research/statistics, then incorporate
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- I have nothing to disclose.
References


Questions?