

Review of “The Impact of Medicaid Expansion”
Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, February 2019

<http://www.will-law.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/medicaidstudyfinal.pdf>

This report was created to provide Republican legislators the opportunity to parade their talking points alongside a poorly designed statistical analysis.

The underlying study attempts to prove a correlation between the cost of private healthcare and the adoption of Medicaid expansion. Secondly, to support its healthcare cost conclusion, it also attempts to correlate the number of ER visits to the adoption of Medicaid expansion.

The report states the per capita annual cost of private healthcare will rise \$196 more in states that adopt Medicaid expansion and there will be 9 more ER visits per 1000 per year in states that adopt Medicaid expansion. Instead the report intentionally leaves much to the imagination.

Basic flaws with the analysis

- Medicaid expansion is implemented differently in each state so all programs cannot be lumped together in a single variable. It’s like trying to establish a connection to something that could be an apple pear, or banana. Even the report says, “a deeper analysis is needed to control for other factors.”
- To determine the healthcare cost correlation, data from 2002 until 2014 was used. In 2014 there were only 4 states including D.C. that ‘expanded’ Medicaid prior to the official start. Other states that joined in January 2014 were just beginning.
- To determine the ER visit correlation, data from 2002 until 2016 was used. The model makes no attempt to distinguish between those visits resulting in uncompensated care and those covered by private or public insurance. If the implication is that the increase in ER visits was due to new Medicaid patients, it doesn’t attempt to identify if the care received was justified or unjustified (alternative access to care was available and more appropriate) or whether the state provided adequate education regarding preventative health and how and when to receive medical help.

This study contradicts other studies

- Studies have shown that insurance rates in states that have expanded Medicaid have 7% to 11% lower insurance rates.

<https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-101704401-pdf>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/hec.3809>

- Two recent single-state studies in Maryland and Illinois found declines in uninsured ER visits and increases in Medicaid-covered ER visits following expansion implementation.

[http://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0196-0644\(17\)30784-9/pdf](http://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0196-0644(17)30784-9/pdf)

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10900-016-0293-4>

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