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## **Medicaid Expansion Will Save Lives in Idaho**

*Expanding Medicaid in 2014 Would Have Saved 180 Idahoans*

BOISE, ID – Expanding Medicaid has prevented over 19,000 premature deaths nationwide, according to [landmark new research](#). Conversely, 15,600 older adults died prematurely because of state decisions not to expand Medicaid. In Idaho alone, 180 lives were lost between 2014 and 2017 as a result of the choice not to expand Medicaid.

“Medicaid expansion not only lets people obtain preventive services, medications, and other health care and avoid crushing medical debt, it can literally be a matter of life and death,” said Liz Woodruff, coordinator of Close the Gap Idaho.

If all states had expanded Medicaid, the lives saved just among older adults in 2017 would roughly equal the lives saved by seatbelts among the full population. These new findings add to the large and growing body of research on the benefits of expansion. For example, expansion has led to large boosts in the share of low-income adults getting regular check-ups and other preventive care and filling prescriptions for heart disease, diabetes, mental health conditions, and other chronic health needs, as well as large decreases in the share of people going without a personal physician and skipping medications due to cost.

Expanding coverage also has increased financial security by lowering medical debt and reducing the risk of medical bankruptcy. And another [new study](#) finds that evictions have fallen about 20 percent in expansion compared to non-expansion states, indicating that gaining coverage is helping people avoid one of the most harmful consequences of financial stress.

“Study after study has shown that Medicaid expansion helps more people access care, improves health outcomes, and leads to more financial security” Woodruff said. “Idaho’s pending Medicaid expansion is good for Idaho. But these positive impacts will only be felt if Idaho’s Medicaid expansion is implemented without barriers to coverage, like work reporting requirements. Lawmakers should keep these important outcomes in mind when they return to session in January,” Woodruff concluded.

Enrollment for Medicaid expansion began in Idaho on November 1, 2019 and coverage for the Medicaid expansion population will begin on January 1, 2020. A decision on work reporting requirements in Idaho is pending before the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) following the end of a federal comment period on November 2, 2019.

To learn more, please visit: [<https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/medicaid-expansion-has-saved-at-least-19000-lives-new-research-finds>]

The study of expansion's impact on premature deaths, by Sarah Miller, Sean Altekruise, Norman Johnson, and Laura Wherry, can be found at <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26081>

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**About Close the Gap Idaho:** Close the Gap Idaho is a network of over 5,000 organizations and individuals statewide, working to support a complete solution to the coverage gap and to preserve health coverage for Idahoans. Close the Gap Idaho has led the effort to expand Medicaid in Idaho since 2014. A list of Close the Gap Idaho steering committee members can be found on the [Close the Gap Idaho website](#).