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MEDICAID PROVES ITS WORTH IN OKLAHOMA

System is Far From 'Broken' and is Ready to Handle Expansion



Accepting federal dollars to extend Medicaid would provide substantial economic benefits to Oklahoma, save the state millions of dollars that now go to cover the cost of caring for those without insurance, create new jobs in health care and related fields, and generate significant new tax revenues. The vast bulk of the cost – more than 90 percent – would be covered by the federal government.

Despite these compelling benefits, some assert that Oklahoma would be better off not expanding Medicaid. Critics claim that Medicaid is an “outdated program” and “a broken system.” In reality, Oklahoma’s Medicaid program, SoonerCare, is an indispensable cornerstone of the state’s health care system, providing affordable, efficient care to hundreds of thousands of low-income children, expecting mothers, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Oklahoma’s Medicaid program has proven its worth in many ways:

Medicaid is a cost-effective health insurance program.

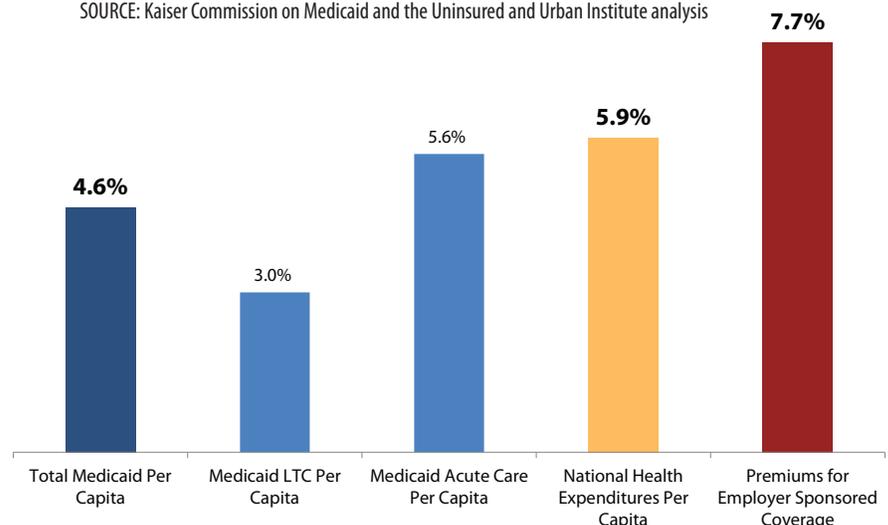
Medicaid costs have risen at a more modest pace than total health expenditures or premiums for employer-sponsored coverage. Oklahoma’s Medicaid costs are well below the national average.

Medicaid recipients have access to a broad-based provider network.

There are over 34,000 medical providers with a SoonerCare contract. The program’s network of primary care physicians have capacity to serve more than twice as many SoonerCare patients as are currently enrolled in the program.

Annual Medicaid Spending Growth Versus Growth in Various Benchmarks, 2000-2009

SOURCE: Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured and Urban Institute analysis



Medicaid pays providers fairly and competitively.

Oklahoma's provider rates are among the nation's highest. Most doctors are paid at 96.5 percent of Medicare rates, while those affiliated with the state's medical schools are reimbursed at over 140 percent of Medicare rates.

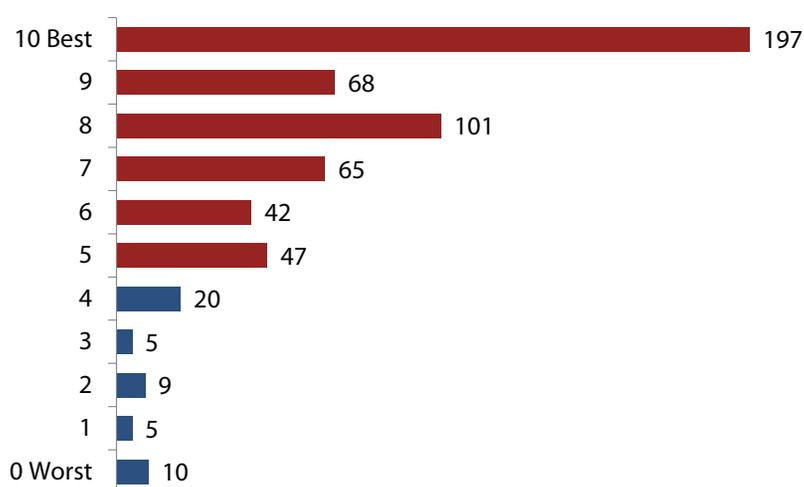
Medicaid patients are satisfied with the service.

Surveys of Oklahoma Medicaid patients consistently show high levels of satisfaction with their care. Among adult SoonerCare patients, 91 percent rated their satisfaction with the program as "above average"

Oklahoma's Medicaid program has developed high-quality, cost-effective programs.

Oklahoma has implemented a number of programs in recent years to improve the quality of care and service for Medicaid patients and to reward providers for better, more cost-effective care. Oklahoma's online eligibility and enrollment system is one of the most advanced in the nation.

SoonerCare Choice Health Plan Ratings



Source: Oklahoma Health Care Authority. CAHPS Adult Health Survey for SoonerCare Choice. May 2010.

Medicaid coverage leads to better health outcomes.

Recent research has convincingly established that Medicaid provides wide-ranging benefits in terms of access to health care, physical and mental health outcomes, and the financial stability of families.

Medicaid is improving lives in Oklahoma every day. Expanding the program to low-income adults would provide clear and compelling benefits to Oklahoma and its citizens.

For the full-length issue brief, go to: <http://okpolicy.org/medicaid-proves-its-worth-in-oklahoma>

For more resources and information, go to: <http://okpolicy.org/medicaid-and-the-affordable-care-act>