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## Report finds Medicaid expansion benefiting Ohio Changing program could dampen outcomes

Medicaid expansion is giving hundreds of thousands of Ohioans access to care, while ensuring providers and health systems receive payment, according to a new Policy Matters Ohio report.

“Ohio has joined 27 states and the District of Columbia in a successful Medicaid expansion,” said Wendy Patton, report author. “Thanks to this, all Ohioans have access to health care, which allows people to lead healthier, more productive lives and protects everyone from infectious diseases.”

Ohio broadened coverage to reach poor working adults through the Medicaid expansion provision of the Affordable Care Act. Since January of this year, 367,395 Ohioans enrolled and many are getting health care services they need. Trends noted by Ohio’s health systems include:

- MetroHealth Systems in Cleveland sponsored an early Medicaid expansion pilot project. Emergency department visits dropped by 60 percent and primary care visits rose by 50 percent. Charity care dropped by half, from \$268 million in 2012 to \$132 million in 2013.
- Ohio State University’s Wexner Medical Center reported a 19 percent drop in uninsured care between July 2013 and June 2014.
- Mount Carmel Health System saw a 10 percent decline in uninsured patients during the first half of 2014 compared to the last six months of 2013.
- St. Vincent’s Hospital in Cleveland has seen Medicaid enrollees in the hospital’s payer mix rise by 19 percent and the cost of charity care go down.
- The Cleveland Clinic has seen a substantial increase in its Medicaid volumes.
- Berger Health System of Circleville, Ohio saw a 30.4% decline in the number of uninsured patients from January to July 2014. Most of these patients have migrated to Medicaid.

Medicaid expansion allows coverage of working poor adults earning up to 138 percent of poverty (\$16,104). The federal government pays all costs for the first three years and then steps down to 90 percent by 2020. In 2013, the State Controlling Board, made up mostly of legislators, accepted the \$2.5 billion dollars to pay for covering the Medicaid expansion population. Legislators must now renew the expansion to receive billions more dollars in the budget for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

Some states have expanded Medicaid through federal waivers to traditional Medicaid rules. “Our early research shows that the waivers granted to date include features that make for a less effective program,” said Patton. “Ohio’s initial approach to Medicaid is working and legislators should renew it in its current form.”