

# What Effects would the Proposed Cuts to the ACA have on the Opioid Crisis?

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# Background

- The Affordable Care Act (ACA), passed in 2014, expanded Medicaid eligibility in the U.S.
- The ACA includes substance use disorder (SUD) treatment as a part of essential health benefits
- In May 2025, the House passed a bill proposing many cuts to the ACA

# Research Question?

Main Question: What are the possible impacts of rolling back Medicaid on the opioid epidemic?

Sub-Questions?:

1. How many people will be affected by the introduction of the Big Beautiful Bill Act and lose access to treatment?
2. Who is most affected by the introduction of this?
3. What effects does rolling back Medicaid have on hospitals in terms of burden?

# Prior Research

## Drug Overdoses and Treatment

- Estimates for OUD in the U.S.: prevalence rate of 2.1% or 5.4 million adults aged 18 and above
- 76% of drug overdose deaths in 2023 were linked to opioids
- Data indicates that in 2023, Medicaid covers 56% of people receiving treatment for OUD

## Effects of Medicaid Expansion

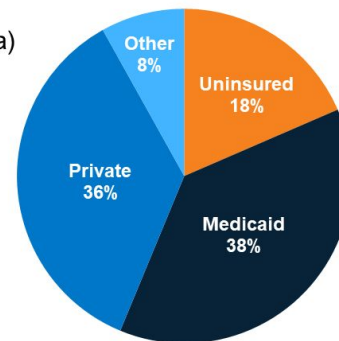
- Over half of the Medicaid beneficiaries treated for OUD were eligible due to Medicaid expansion
- Research by Andrews et al. finds that in Medicaid expansion states, the share of people receiving OUD treatment in the prior year who were covered by Medicaid rose from 26% in 2014 to 43% in 2017

# Data

- National Survey on Drug Use and Health
- Kaiser Family Foundation
- U.S. Census

## Almost 1 in 5 Nonelderly Adults with Opioid Use Disorder Are Uninsured

(2016-2017 data)



Total Nonelderly Adults with OUD: 2 Million

NOTE: Nonelderly adults are 18 to 64 years. Other includes Medicare, CHAMPUS, and any other type of health insurance.  
SOURCE: KFF analysis of 2016 & 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

# Model

- Goal: model the possible effects of Medicaid cuts on the opioid epidemic
- Plan:
  - Use the effects of pre- and post- ACA implementation on Medicaid to model future effects
  - Compare states that expanded Medicaid vs. those that didn't
  - Use data over a span of 10 years