

More than 10 million people gained coverage under Obamacare, study finds

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Expansion of Medicaid was a major factor in boosting numbers, researchers report.

(HealthDay)—A new study estimates that more than 10 million uninsured Americans gained health coverage over the past year due to the Affordable Care Act.

The biggest gains came in states that expanded eligibility for Medicaid, the federal insurance program for the poor. Under [health care reform](#), popularly known as Obamacare, states had a choice about expanding eligibility.

"This study reaffirms that the Affordable Care Act has set us on a path toward achieving that goal," Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell said in an agency statement. "This study also reaffirms that expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act is important for coverage, as well as a good deal for states. To date, 26 states plus [Washington] D.C. have moved forward with Medicaid expansion. We're hopeful remaining states will come on board, and we look forward to working closely with them."

The study, led by Dr. Benjamin Sommers of the HHS, examined insurance statistics before and after a period in which a variety of people could apply for private or publicly funded coverage through [health insurance](#) exchanges.

Sommers' team found that the percentage of

uninsured people among those aged 18-64 dropped from 21 percent in 2013 to 16 percent in 2014. Certain groups saw the largest gains in coverage levels: Latinos, blacks and adults aged 18-34.

More young people gained coverage earlier by being able to remain on their parents' insurance plans, the researchers found.

Overall, and after factoring in pre-existing trends and economic factors, 10.3 million U.S. adults gained coverage, the report found. In terms of access to health care, 4.4 million more adults said they now have a personal doctor, and 5.3 million fewer adults said they encountered difficulties paying for care.

The expansion of Medicaid seemed key: While the country as a whole saw a 5.1 percent drop in the uninsured rate, no significant reduction in the number of uninsured adults was seen in states that did not expand Medicaid, the study found.

The study was published online July 23 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

On Tuesday, two federal appeals courts arrived at completely different conclusions on the use of financial subsidies provided to millions of Americans who bought health insurance through the federal HealthCare.gov exchange.

The conflicting opinions—which center on a crucial provision of Obamacare—suggest that the matter is headed for a showdown before the U.S. Supreme Court.

More information: Visit the U.S. government website for details on coverage under the [Affordable Care Act](#).

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