

Medicaid Coverage is Veterans' Coverage

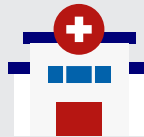
By Hayley Cormican

We come together on Veterans Day to honor our veterans, and their families, for their service keeping our nation safe and secure. Our veterans kept their oath to protect and serve us and we can honor them by ensuring they have access to quality, affordable health care.

Medicaid coverage plays a key role in Arkansas, including among our veteran population:



Connection to preventive and emergency care






Support to rural health providers



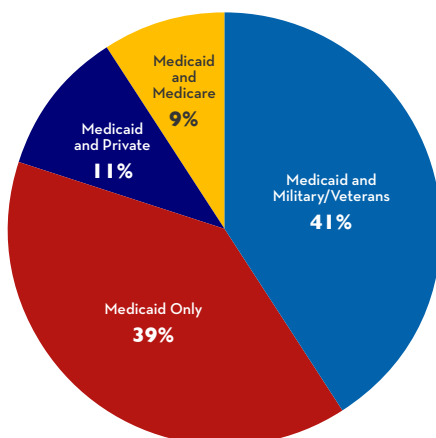
Crucial supplement to VA benefits

Increasing Access to Care

ARHOME, Arkansas's Medicaid program, ensures that eligible veterans living in Arkansas can get what they need to get and stay healthy, by providing:

-  Timely access to life-saving treatments
-  Peace of mind when seeking care
-  Improved financial stability

US Veterans' Medicaid Coverage



Source: US data

Supplementing Coverage

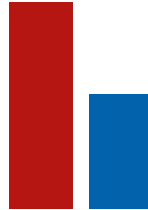
Although many veterans have access to health care coverage through the Veterans Health Administration (VA), eligibility is limited. VA facilities, especially in rural states like Arkansas, can be in [hard-to-reach locations](#) and may have long wait times. This can make it difficult for veterans and their families to access care in a timely manner. Many veterans supplement their VA coverage with Medicaid, which allows them expanded access to care facilities and lower wait times for emergency care.

What Medicaid Expansion Meant for Arkansas Veterans

Arkansas made health care coverage more accessible for all Arkansans by expanding Medicaid in 2014, thanks to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This expansion increased Medicaid eligibility income limits to 138% of the Federal Poverty Line. Medicaid expansion made access to quality and affordable health care a reality for veterans who may not be eligible for VA benefits or live in an area where accessing VA facilities is impossible.



47.7% of uninsured veterans in the U.S. became eligible for Medicaid coverage under the ACA.



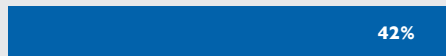
The uninsurance rate for veterans in Arkansas dropped from **14.8% to 8.2%** within the first two years following expansion – the second largest coverage gain for veterans across all Medicaid expansion states.

Treating Complex Health Needs

In addition to ensuring that veterans have access to a broader range of health care services, Medicaid also plays a key role in [addressing complex health needs](#) amongst our past military service members including chronic health conditions, severe mental illness, disabilities, and substance use disorders. Veterans also have a higher risk of experiencing homelessness than other populations, making up [nearly 12%](#) of those experiencing homelessness. But in Medicaid expansion states like Arkansas, there has been a [sharp decrease](#) nationwide in the number of evictions post-Medicaid expansion compared to their non-expansion counterparts. Medicaid can also help prevent homelessness by providing access to affordable care, and protecting veterans from [unforeseen medical expenses](#). Given the complex health needs and higher rates of homelessness for veterans, any roll backs to their Medicaid health coverage could be catastrophic.

US Veterans with Medicaid Have Complex Health Needs

Have 2 of more chronic conditions



Have a disability



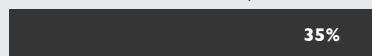
Have a severe mental illness



Have a substance use disorder



Describe their health as fair or poor

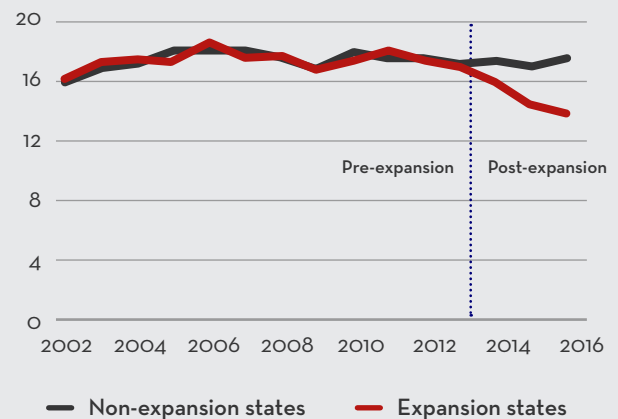


Note: figures are for the 875,000 non-elderly veterans with Medicaid in 2015.

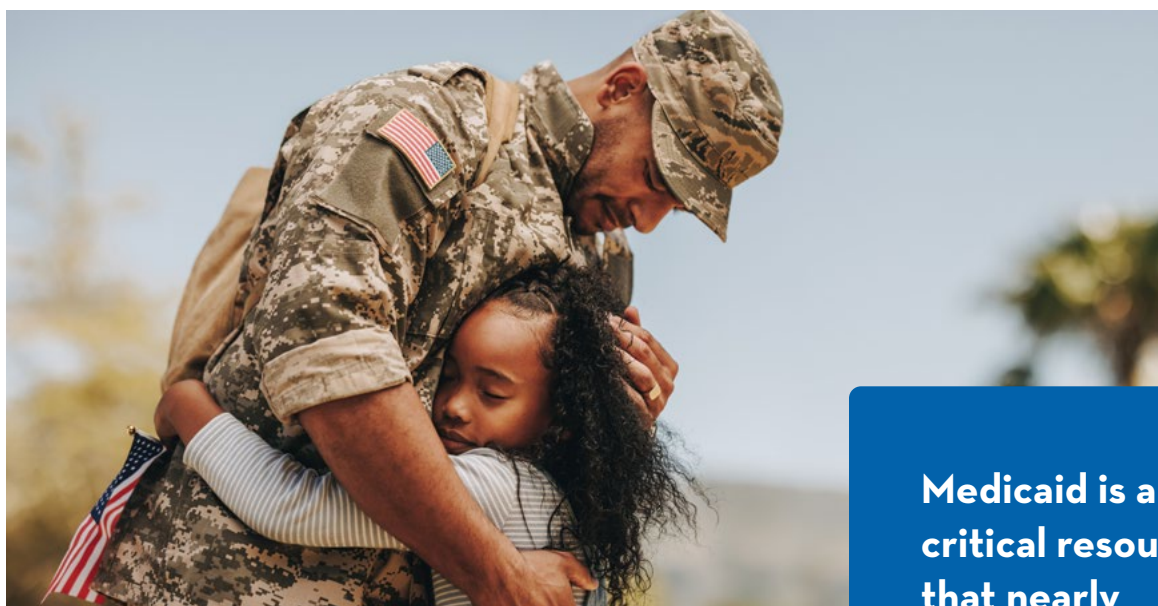
Source: US data

Evictions Fell Sharply in Medicaid Expansion States

Evictions per 1,000 renter-occupied households



Source: Zewde et al, "The Effect of the ACA Medicaid Expansion on Nationwide Home Evictions and Eviction-Court Initiations," 2019



Medicaid is a critical resource that nearly

3 MILLION CHILDREN

in military-connected families are eligible for or covered by.

The Family Impact

Medicaid also helps to ensure that our military-connected families - which includes veterans - have access to health care. Over [3 million](#) children living in military-connected families in the United States are eligible for or covered through Medicaid. This coverage is essential for kids to get the care they need quickly, and improves access to specialist providers. For children with [complex health care needs](#), Medicaid provides access to early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment (EPSDT), mental and behavioral health services, and home and community-based services. With the help of Medicaid, children living in military-connected households are able to access a wider array of care when they need it - and get the support they need to thrive.

Arkansas's veterans, and their families, served our country faithfully. Now, it's our duty to ensure they have access to high quality and affordable health care and coverage to get the care and support they need to stay healthy. We must keep Medicaid coverage accessible to the veteran community and push to protect the program for all Arkansans.

Medicaid Matters on Veterans Day: Protect Medicaid – Protect our veterans.

REFERENCES:

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