

Medicaid Expansion Improves Access to Care and Outcomes for Patients with Lung Cancer

Medicaid expansion was associated with greater increases in timely initiation of guideline-concordant care and five-year overall survival.

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A new study by researchers at [the American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) showed Medicaid expansion under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act may improve access to non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) care and outcomes across the cancer control continuum, from early-stage diagnosis, treatment initiation, and overall survival. The findings [were] presented at the annual [American Society of Clinical Oncology \(ASCO\) Quality Care Symposium](#) in San Francisco, September 27-28, 2024.

In the study, led by [Dr. Jingxuan Zhao](#), senior scientist, health services research at the American Cancer Society and presented at the conference by [Dr. Xuesong Han](#), researchers identified individuals newly diagnosed at age 18 to 64 with Stages I-IV first primary NSCLC between 2008 and 2019 in 50 states and Washington, D.C., from the National Cancer Database.

They examined the associations of Medicaid expansion with (1) diagnosis stage; (2) timely initiation of guideline-concordant treatment; (3) receipt of guideline-concordant treatment; and (4) five-year overall survival. They applied a difference-in-differences (DD) approach to examine the changes in study outcomes associated with Medicaid expansion, controlling for key sociodemographic and clinical factors.

The study showed the percentage of early-stage diagnoses increased from 23.1% pre-expansion to 31.9% post-expansion in expansion states and from 22.3% to 29.5% in non-expansion states, translating to a greater increase in early-stage diagnosis of 1.7 percentage points in expansion states after adjustment. Medicaid expansion was also associated with greater increases in timely initiation of guideline-concordant care and five-year overall survival.

Researchers emphasized findings from this study can inform efforts to expand Medicaid in the 10 states that have yet to do so.

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