

Obamacare repeal would cost children in Idaho, study says

Lemhi, Adams, Lewis, Custer, Clearwater, Idaho, Clark, Boise, Butte and Madison counties have the highest percentage of children who receive Medicaid or are covered under the Children's Health Insurance Plan.

Two out of five Idaho children receive federally subsidized health care, and in some counties the figure is nearly half, according to a state health coalition lobbying against efforts to replace the 2010 Affordable Care Act and cut its health care subsidies.

Close the Gap Idaho's numbers come from a national report on Medicaid reliance in rural parts of the United States. The Idaho report notes that reducing health care tax credits and cutting back on Medicaid payments to states — two components of Republican-led health care proposals now in Congress — would reverse declines in the rates of uninsured adults and children Idaho has seen under the ACA, or Obamacare.

The counties of Lemhi, Adams, Lewis, Custer, Clearwater, Idaho, Clark, Boise, Butte and Madison have the highest percentage of children who receive Medicaid or are covered under the Children's Health Insurance Plan, with numbers ranging from 46 percent to 53 percent. The 10 counties with the lowest percentage range from 30 percent to 33 percent, including Ada County, at 33 percent. Canyon County is at 40 percent.

Citing data from the national study, the Idaho group said the adult uninsured rate in Idaho's small towns and rural areas dropped from 28 percent to 19 percent after Obamacare was enacted. The rate of uninsured children dropped from 13 percent to 9 percent during the same period. The decreases were due, at least in part, to subsidized insurance available via the state health insurance exchange.

Releasing data last week, Close the Gap Idaho said changes in how tax credits would be allocated under the Republican plan would reduce assistance and raise costs for rural residents, especially older Idahoans. Citing another national report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the group listed the example of a 60-year-old Custer County man with an income of \$30,000 who would lose nearly \$5,000 in tax credits and pay \$8,650 annually more for coverage, a 350 percent increase.

The figures are based on the House-approved American Health Care Act. Senate Republicans are preparing their own Obamacare replacement plan and have drawn criticism for working on it in secret.

###