

Senate health care bill could cost states

Research group concludes Washington, Idaho could lose coverage, federal funding

More than 650,000 people in Washington could lose Medicaid and other health care coverage in the next 10 years under the Senate's latest proposal to change the nation's health care system. The state could lose about \$17 billion in federal funding over that time period.

Idaho could see about 200,000 lose Medicaid coverage over that period, but could actually break even in federal funds through a change in the formulas for sending federal money to the states.

Those are the conclusions of two separate studies of the new bill, known as Graham-Cassidy, that could get a vote in the U.S. Senate by the end of the month.

The short schedule for the vote means that the Congressional Budget Office won't have time to do the extensive analysis that it conducted for some previous bills designed to make major changes in the Affordable Care Act.

But the Center for American Progress, a nonpartisan progressive research group, combined some of its analysis with previous studies by the budget office and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and estimated that at least 32 million people across the country would lose their current Medicaid coverage in 2027.

Most of those are people who became eligible for the federal health care program under the ACA, which is also known as Obamacare. In the state-by-state breakdowns, the center estimates that would include 657,000 people in Washington and 201,000 in Idaho as the federal government put state limits on the number of people eligible for the program under new formulas.

Avalere, a company that studies the health care system, estimates the federal government will reduce payments to the states by gradually removing some of the Obamacare provisions for Medicaid expansion, tax credits, cost sharing, mandates and the Basic Health Plan, and substitute a system of block grants to the states.

It would cut federal health care funding by \$215 billion through 2026, with even steeper reductions after that, the company's researchers estimate.

Through 2026, the changes would affect states like Washington, which expanded eligibility for Medicaid, more than states like Idaho, which didn't. Washington would see a reduction of \$10 billion in federal funds over that period, and Idaho would see an increase of \$1 billion, because of the change in block grant formulas.

After 2026, the federal block grants to the states would end. Washington would see a drop of \$7 billion in federal money for Medicaid, and Idaho get a drop of about \$1 billion. If Congress makes no changes over the next

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10 years, Washington would see a total reduction of \$110 billion in federal funds between 2020 and 2036, and Idaho a total of \$12 billion, Avalere estimates.

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