

2024 Medicaid in Montana: Behavioral Health

Montana Medicaid provides health care coverage to nearly 300,000 Montanans with low income, including children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and adults. Medicaid coverage allows Montanans to access mental illness and substance use disorder services like screening, outpatient treatment, crisis services, and inpatient care when needed.

Medicaid provides access to care for members with mental health conditions and substance use disorders.



Nearly one of every three Medicaid members (92,983) had a behavioral health diagnosis in 2022, an increase of 9% since 2018.

Medicaid members are increasingly accessing care to support recovery from mental health conditions and substance use disorders.

Medicaid claims between 2018 and 2022:

48% a 48% increase in anxiety disorder services

89% an 89% increase in opioid use disorder services



Primary care providers play a central role in caring for Medicaid members with substance use disorders.

55% of opioid use disorder services

49% of substance use disorder services

Primary care provided 55% of services for people with opioid use disorders and 49% of services for people with other substance use disorders, including alcohol, cannabis, stimulant use, and nicotine dependence.

Medicaid Expansion Supports Behavioral Health



In 2016, the **HELP Act expanded Medicaid to cover adults with incomes up to 133% of the federal poverty level** (\$19,391 in 2023). By implementing Medicaid expansion, Montana has expanded health coverage, improved access to services, controlled costs, and built a stronger health system.

Medicaid expansion is a powerful tool for addressing Montana's behavioral health crisis because it provides a payment source for people needing care and helps providers expand services.

Medicaid expansion enrollees increasingly accessed mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

35,000 received mental health services
6,100 received substance use treatment

In 2022, nearly 35,000 people (798 more than the year before) received mental health services, and more than 6,100 received treatment for substance use

Medicaid expansion enrollees with chronic behavioral health conditions visited the ER less frequently the longer they had coverage.

8% decrease for mental health **9%** decrease for substance use

Between their first and third years of having health insurance, the number of Medicaid expansion enrollees needing emergency mental health care decreased by 8%, and substance use disorder care decreased by 9%.

Montana's Recent Mental Health Policies Depend on Medicaid Expansion for Success



The governor's [HEART Initiative](#) allows Medicaid to cover new treatment for methamphetamine use and address housing needs for people with serious mental illness and substance use.

[HB 872](#) (2023) allocated \$300 million to build a "Behavioral Health System for Future Generations." Many of the programs funded will require Medicaid reimbursement to be financially viable.

Also in 2023, the State Legislature [increased reimbursement](#) for behavioral health to help Montana fix its longstanding workforce shortages and recruit and retain high-quality providers. Those reimbursement rates depend on patients having Medicaid coverage through Medicaid expansion.



For more information on these findings, visit mthf.org/resource/2024-medicaid-in-montana/