

**WASHINGTON STATE HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Demographic Characteristics and Health Status of Non-elderly Adults Enrolled in Washington’s Medicaid Expansion in 2015**

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**Introduction**

In 2014, Washington state implemented the Medicaid expansion under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). This expanded Medicaid eligibility to all legal residents with household incomes at or below 138 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).

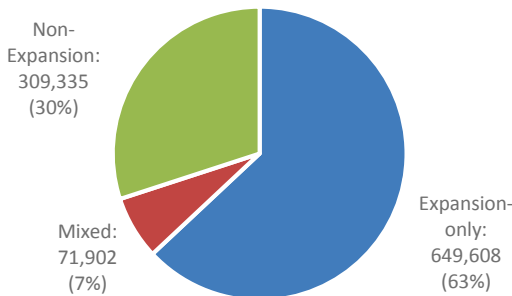
In the first year of implementation, the state’s total Medicaid enrollment increased nearly 50 percent<sup>1</sup>; by December 2015, total enrollment had grown 59 percent since 2013, equaling 668,000 new enrollees. This enrollment growth is largely attributable to the addition of expansion-eligible, non-elderly adults who totaled 592,500 in December 2015.

Using the Medicaid program’s administrative data, this research brief compares the demographic characteristics and health status of the non-elderly adults enrolled under the expansion with the non-elderly Medicaid clients enrolled under the then existing eligibility requirements.<sup>2</sup> Demographic characteristics presented in this brief include age, gender, race,

*Highlights:*

- ✓ Washington’s Medicaid enrollment increased by 59 percent in 2015 from its pre-expansion level in 2013.
- ✓ Most of the increase is attributable to enrollment of non-elderly adults in the Expansion group.
- ✓ Expansion adult enrollees differed from other adult enrollees:
  - About 5 years older with an average age of 38.5;
  - More than half (51%) male vs. more than two-thirds female among other adults;
  - A slightly greater share of white enrollees (70% vs. 64%);
  - A smaller share with Hispanic ethnicity (17% vs. 21%);
  - Slightly more from the western urban areas (64% vs. 60%)
  - Fewer with chronic health conditions (28% vs. 33%).

Chart 1. Washington State Medicaid Enrollment of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) by Expansion Status 2015 (Total=1,030,845)



Hispanic ethnicity and region. Health status is represented by the presence of chronic health conditions.

**Results**

**Enrollment**

In 2015, a total of 1,030,845 non-elderly adults were enrolled in Medicaid (Chart 1). Enrollees in the expansion program (Expansion-only) constituted nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the total enrolled non-elderly adults. The balance consisted of 30 percent Non-Expansion enrollees and 7 percent enrollees who

<sup>1</sup> Yen, W. and Mounts, T. April 2016. “[Medicaid Growth under the ACA: A Game-Changer in Reducing Washington’s Uninsured in 2014.](#)” OFM Health Care Research Center.

<sup>2</sup> The non-expansion group includes those who meet requirements in each of these eligibility groups: non-elderly, disabled adults; adults, mostly women, who qualify as parents and caretakers; pregnant women; and 18 year olds, male and female, who qualify under the children’s health program until age 19.

were listed as expansion enrollees at some time and non-expansion enrollees at some other time during 2015 (Mixed).

**Age and Gender**

In 2015 the Expansion-only enrollees had an average age of 38.5 years (Chart 2), making them about five years older than enrollees in the Mixed and Non-Expansion groups who were, on average, 32.8 and 33.7 years old, respectively.

The gender distribution shows that females made up less than half (48.7 percent) of the enrollees in the Expansion-only group (Chart 3). In contrast, more than two-thirds of the enrollees in Mixed (69.3 percent) and Non-Expansion (67.0 percent) groups were female.

Chart 2. Average Age (Years) of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) Enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid by Expansion Status, 2015

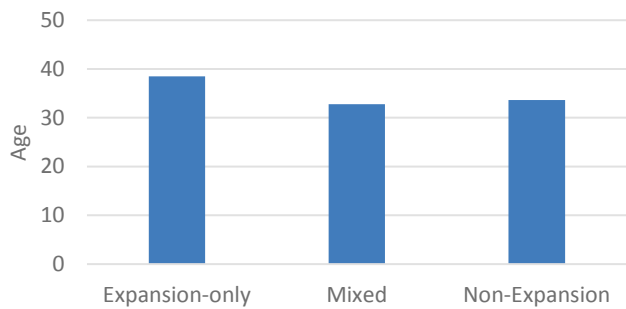
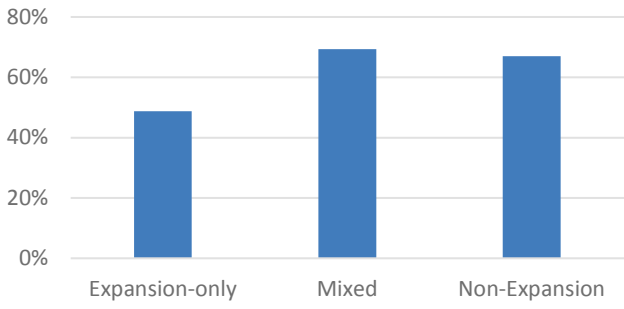
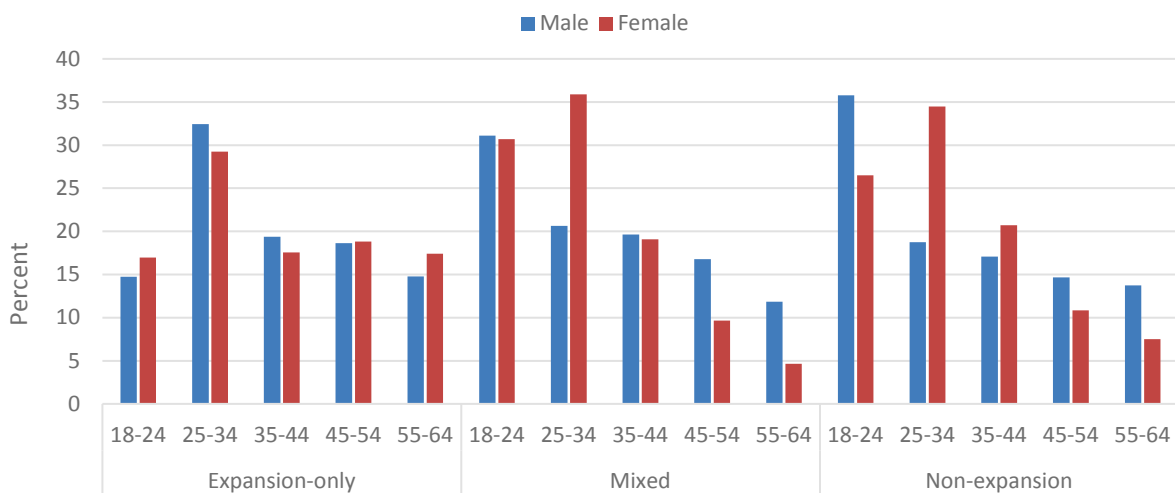


Chart 3. Percentage Female of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) Enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid by Expansion Status, 2015



The gender-age groupings, shown in Chart 4, reveal marked differences among the three groups, especially between the Expansion-only group and the other two groups. Within the Expansion-only group, male enrollees and female enrollees did not differ much by age, and the age groupings claimed

Chart 4. Percentage of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) Enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid by Expansion Status, Sex and Age, 2015



fairly equal shares: less than 20 percent each of the total enrollees except for the 25-34 age group whose share equaled about 30 percent of the total.

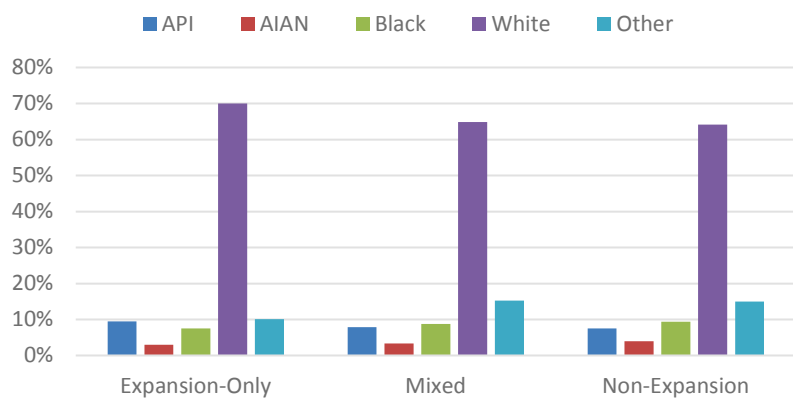
In comparison, the other two groups had most of their total enrollees (over half) in the two youngest age groups, i.e., ages 18-24 and 25-34. In addition, these two groups showed gender differences. Both groups showed significantly more females in the prime child-bearing age group of 25-34. The Non-Expansion group also showed more females in the 35-44 age group. The other age groupings of the Mixed and Non-Expansion enrollees showed more males than females with varying amounts of difference.

**Race and Ethnicity<sup>3</sup>**

The race of the Expansion-only enrollees consisted of 70 percent White, 9.4 percent Asian American and Pacific Islander (API), 7.5 percent Black, 2.9 percent American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) and 10.1 percent other single race or multi-race (Other) (see Chart 5). Shares of White and API in the Expansion-only group were greater than the corresponding shares in the Mixed and Non-Expansion groups. On the other hand, shares of Black and Other in the former group were smaller than the counterpart shares in the latter two groups. The latter two groups were quite similar in their racial composition with each comprising about 64 percent White, 8 percent API, 4 percent AIAN, 9 percent Black and 15 percent Other.

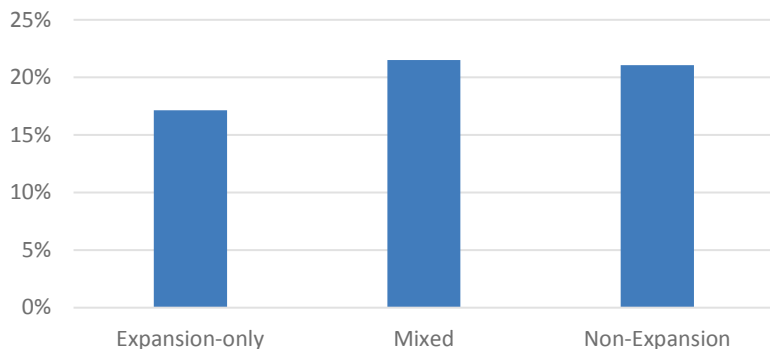
Enrollees with Hispanic ethnicity accounted for a smaller share, at 17.1 percent, in the Expansion-only group, compared with roughly 21 percent each in the Mixed and Non-Expansion groups were of Hispanic ethnicity (Chart 6).

Chart 5. Race of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) Enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid by Expansion Status (%) 2015



(Based beneficiaries with known race. A small fraction of each group has no known race: Expansion-only - 6.3%, Mixed - 4.7%, and non-Expansion - 6.5%)

Chart 6. Percentage Hispanic of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) Enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid by Expansion Status, 2015

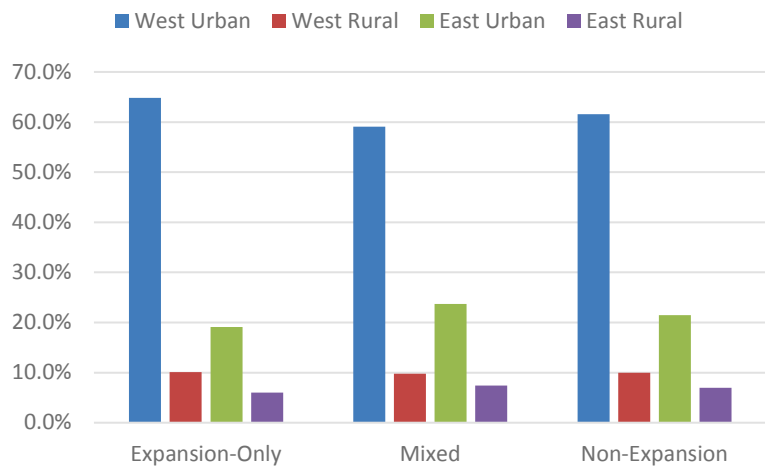


<sup>3</sup> Estimates on race and ethnicity in this research are based on those enrollees with reported race and ethnicity. Of the Medicaid enrollees selected for this research, approximately 6 percent did not have race information and 19 percent did not have Hispanic heritage information.

**Geographic Location**

Based on the enrollees’ residential ZIP Codes, they were grouped into four geographic areas: east urban, east rural, west urban and west rural.<sup>4</sup> Approximately two-thirds (64.8 percent) of the Expansion-only enrollees lived in the west urban areas (Chart 7). For the balance of this group, 19.1 percent lived in east urban, 10.1 percent in west rural and 6.0 percent in east rural areas. This geographic distribution pattern holds true with the other two groups, i.e. the Mixed and Non-Expansion groups, although these latter two groups were more similar to each other than they were to the Expansion-only group. The differences are that a slightly greater share of the Expansion-only group resided in west urban areas (64.8 percent) than the corresponding shares in the latter two groups (59.0 percent in Mixed and 61.6 percent in Non-Expansion), while the share residing in east urban in the former group (19.1 percent) was slightly smaller than in the latter two groups (23.7 percent and 21.5 percent).

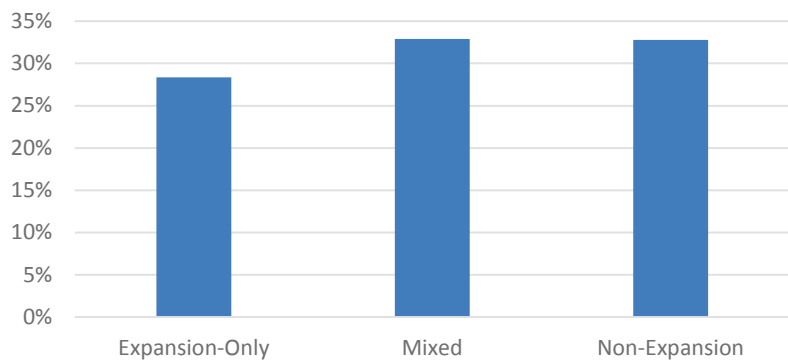
Chart 7. Percentage of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) Enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid by Expansion Status and Region, 2015



**Health Status**

The Expansion-only group appeared to be healthier than the other two groups as far as prevalence of chronic health conditions is concerned. The Expansion-only group had a chronic condition rate of 28.3 percent, compared with a rate of 33 percent each in the Mixed and Non-Expansion groups (Chart 8).<sup>5</sup>

Chart 8. Percentage of Non-elderly Adults (18-64) with Chronic Conditions Enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid by Expansion Status, 2015



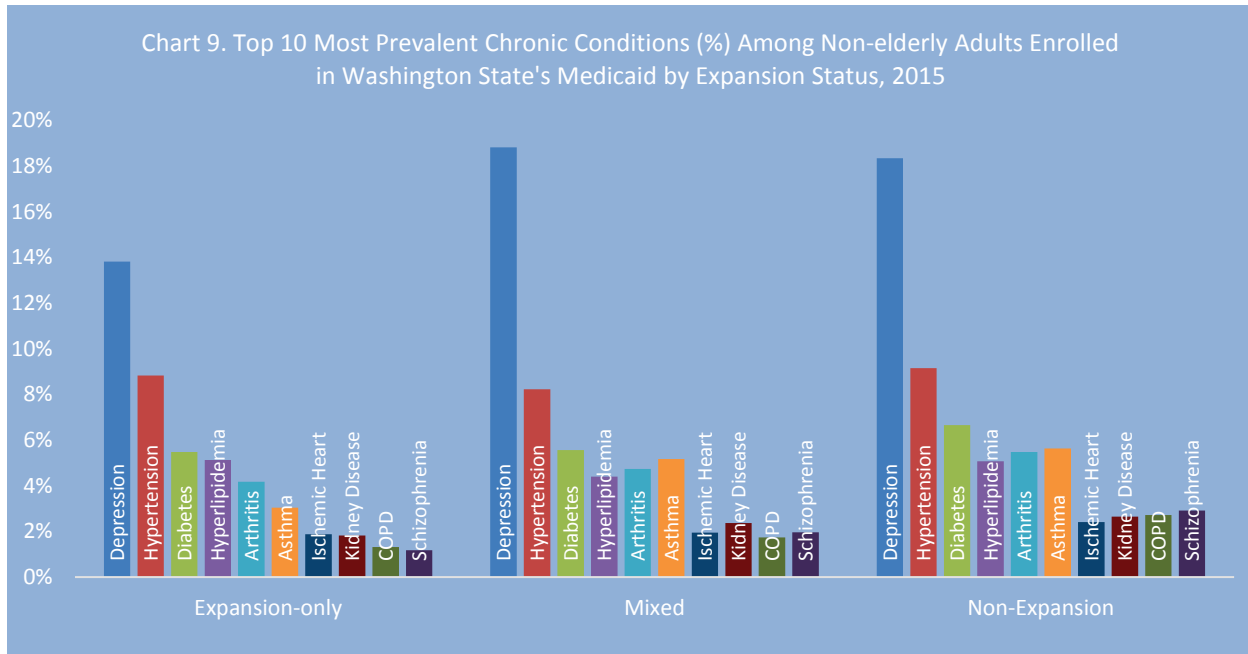
The 10 most prevalent chronic conditions were the same for all three groups, although the rank orders and actual rates were somewhat different, particularly between the Expansion-only group and the other two groups.

For the Expansion-only group, the condition of depression had the highest rate at 13.8 percent, followed by hypertension (8.8 percent) and diabetes (5.5 percent) (see Chart 9). Similarly, depression had the highest rate in the Mixed group and the Non-Expansion group at 18.8 percent and 18.4

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the designation of the geographic areas, see the Data Source and Notes section at the end.

<sup>5</sup> The percentage estimates reported here are summary estimates that combined 19 chronic conditions. An enrollee was considered as having a chronic condition if any of the 19 conditions was found in the Medicaid claims. See Data Source and Notes section for more information.

percent, respectively, and was also followed by the rates for hypertension (8.2 percent and 9.2 percent) and diabetes (5.6 percent and 6.7 percent). Note that the depression rates in the latter two groups were about 5 percentage points higher than the 13.8 percent in the Expansion-only group. In addition, while the depression rate in the Expansion-only group was about 36 percent greater than the rate for the second most prevalent chronic condition, hypertension, in the other two groups the depression rate was twice as large as the rate for the second most prevalent chronic condition, also hypertension.



The rank orders of chronic condition rates for the three groups started to differ from the fourth most prevalent rate. The fourth and sixth most prevalent rates were reversed between the Expansion-only group and the other two groups. For the Expansion-only group, the fourth most prevalent rate was for hyperlipidemia (5.1 percent) and the sixth most prevalent rate was for asthma (3.0 percent). For the other two groups, the fourth place was asthma (5.2 percent and 5.6 percent) and the sixth place was hyperlipidemia (4.4 percent and 5.1 percent). The fifth most prevalent rate was for the same condition, arthritis, across all three groups. For the 10 most prevalent chronic conditions, the Expansion-only group tended to have rates that were lower than the corresponding rates for the other two groups.

## Summary

Washington state implemented the ACA Medicaid expansion in 2014. By 2015, the state's Medicaid enrollment increased by 59 percent over the pre-expansion enrollment level in 2013. Most of the increase came from the non-elderly adults who qualified for the expansion. Among the total non-elderly adults enrolled in the state's Medicaid in 2015, the Expansion-only group constituted nearly two-thirds.

The non-elderly adults in the Expansion-only group had somewhat different characteristics from those of other non-elderly adults enrolled in Medicaid. They were about five years older on average. More than half of them were males while more than two-thirds of the other adults were females. Their racial and ethnic makeup suggests that they were more likely to be White and non-Hispanic in comparison to the other adults. A greater share of them lived in the western urban areas of the state and a smaller

share in eastern urban areas when compared with the other adults. Finally, they tended to be less chronically ill with lower rates of chronic conditions than the other adult enrollees.

### **Data Source and Notes**

Results reported in this research brief were based on analysis of Washington state's Medicaid administrative data on program eligibility and medical care claims. In addition to exclusion of children under age 18 and the elderly age 65 and older, the analysis also excluded enrollees who were not enrolled in programs with full benefits and those who had third-party liability. Enrollees selected for this research included all those meeting the above selection criteria regardless of the number of months on Medicaid in 2015. While most of the selected enrollees were enrolled either under the expansion program code only or non-expansion program code(s) only during their presence on Medicaid in 2015, a small fraction was associated with both the expansion program code and non-expansion program code(s). For this fraction, the program code change in 2015 could be from non-expansion to expansion or vice versa. Data presented in this brief suggest that this group (Mixed) resembled the non-expansion group.

Algorithms from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Chronic Condition Warehouse (CCW) were used in identifying chronic conditions in the Medicaid claims.<sup>6</sup> The CCW's original flags for several specific cancers were grouped to form one cancer flag. In total, 19 chronic condition flags were created for this research, but only the 10 most prevalent conditions are presented here.

For geographic area designation, the state is divided into four categories: eastern urban, western urban, eastern rural and western rural. The eastern/western division was constructed by assigning an enrollee's county based on its location to the Cascades Mountains. The urban/rural allocation was constructed using algorithms obtained from the Missouri Census Data Center that assigned enrollees residential ZIP Codes or county (when ZIP Code was not available) into urban and rural categories.<sup>7</sup>

### **Acknowledgment**

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.ccwdata.org/web/guest/home>.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://mcdc.missouri.edu/>.

## Appendix

Table 1. Medicaid Enrollment of Non-elderly Adults by Expansion Status, 2015, Washington

	Expansion-only	Mixed	Non-Expansion	Total
Enrollment	649,608	71,902	309,337	1,030,847
% of Total Enrollment	63.0	7.0	30.0	100.0

Table 2. Characteristics of Non-elderly Adults Enrolled in Medicaid by Expansion Status, 2015, Washington

	Expansion-only	Mixed	Non-Expansion
Age (in years)	38.5	32.8	33.7
% Female	48.7	69.3	67.0
Gender by Age (%)			
Male 18-24	14.8	31.1	35.8
Male 25-34	32.5	20.6	18.7
Male 35-44	19.4	19.7	17.1
Male 45-54	18.6	16.8	14.7
Male 55-64	14.8	11.8	13.7
Female 18-24	17.0	30.7	26.5
Female 25-34	29.3	35.9	34.5
Female 35-44	17.6	19.1	20.7
Female 45-54	18.8	9.7	10.8
Female 55-64	17.4	4.6	7.5
Race (%)			
API	9.4	7.9	7.5
AIAN	2.9	3.3	3.9
Black	7.5	8.7	9.4
White	70.0	64.8	64.1
Other	10.1	15.2	15.0
% Hispanic	17.1	21.5	21.1
Region (%)			
Western Urban	64.8	59.0	61.6
Western Rural	10.1	9.8	10.0
Eastern Urban	19.1	23.7	21.5
Eastern Rural	6.0	7.4	7.0
Any Chronic Condition (%)	28.3	32.9	32.8
10 Most Prevalent Chronic Conditions (%)*			
Depression	13.8	18.8	18.4
Hypertension	8.8	8.2	9.2
Diabetes	5.5	5.6	6.7
Hyperlipidemia	5.1	4.4	5.1
Arthritis	4.2	4.7	5.5
Asthma	3.0	5.2	5.6
Ischemic Heart	1.9	1.9	2.4
Kidney Disease	1.8	2.4	2.6
COPD	1.3	1.7	2.7
Schizophrenia	1.2	2.0	2.9

\* Rates of chronic conditions are not mutually exclusive.