

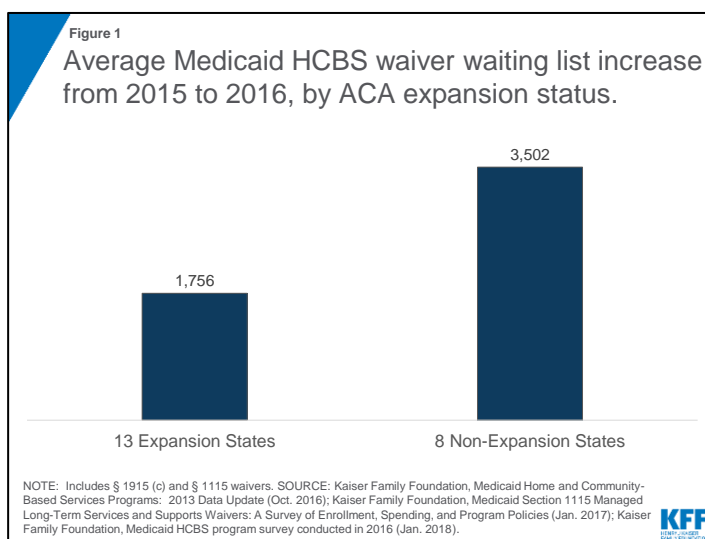
# Data Do Not Support Relationship Between Medicaid Expansion and Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Waiting Lists

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Some have said that [state choices about whether to adopt the ACA's Medicaid expansion](#) come at the expense of [providing Medicaid home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#). Since 2002, the Kaiser Family Foundation has surveyed states about their HCBS waiver waiting lists. [All states offer at least one HCBS waiver](#) for seniors and people with disabilities today. States choose how many people to serve under these waivers, and their ability to limit enrollment can result in waiting lists when the number of people seeking services exceeds the number of waiver slots. This analysis examines the most recent data available, including HCBS waiver waiting list data for 2015 and 2016. The data do not support a relationship between a state's Medicaid expansion status, which is primarily financed with federal funds, and changes in its HCBS waiver waiting list.

## Waiting List Changes and Adoption of Medicaid Expansion

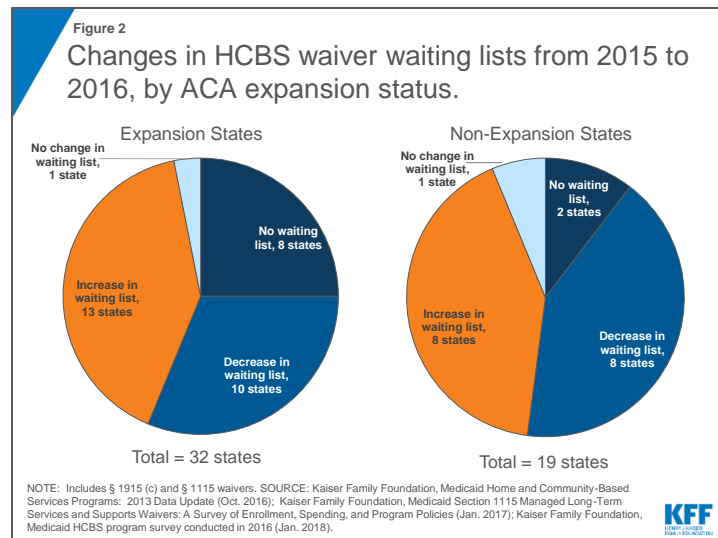
Among the 21 states that experienced an HCBS waiver waiting list increase from 2015 to 2016, the average increase was lower in expansion states compared to non-expansion states (Figure 1). The average waiting list increase across 13 expansion states (Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, North Dakota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, and Oregon) was 1,756 people and ranged from 3 people in North Dakota to 11,101 in Louisiana.<sup>1</sup> The average waiting list increase across eight non-expansion states (Alabama, Maine,<sup>2</sup> Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah) was 3,502 people and ranged from 302 people in Utah to 11,806 people in Texas. Table 1 contains waiting list data by waiver population and state for 2016. In addition, the Medicaid expansion has enabled some people who were not previously eligible for coverage to access needed HCBS, such as home health or personal care state plan services.<sup>3</sup>



**Most ACA expansion states (56%, or 18 of 32<sup>4</sup>) either have no HCBS waiver waiting list or had a decrease in their waiting list from 2015 to 2016 (Figure 2).**

Eight expansion states (Arizona, DC, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington) had no HCBS waiver waiting list in 2015 or 2016; seven of these states (all except Washington) also had no waiting list in 2014, the year that they implemented the expansion. Ten expansion states (Alaska, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey,

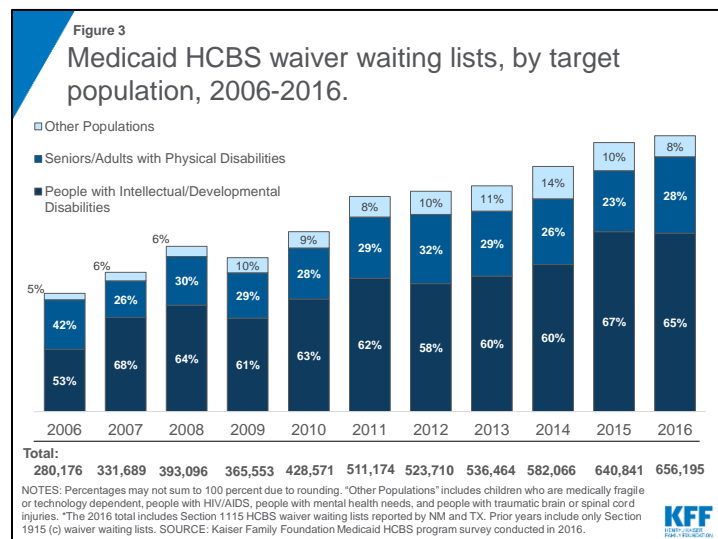
Pennsylvania, and West Virginia) experienced a decrease in their HCBS waiver waiting lists from 2015 to 2016. New Jersey completely cleared its waiting list between 2015 and 2016, and the other nine states experienced double digit percent decreases, ranging from -15% in Montana to -97% in Minnesota. Three of these states (Alaska, Indiana, and Pennsylvania) also experienced waiting list decreases from 2014 to 2015.<sup>5</sup>



**Medicaid HCBS waiver waiting lists predate the ACA’s Medicaid expansion, which became effective in most states in 2014.<sup>6</sup>**

Over 656,000 people in 39 states were on HCBS waiver waiting lists in 2016 (Figure 3); 35% of total HCBS waiver waiting list enrollment (232,000 people) are in Texas, a non-expansion state. Not all people on waiting lists may be eligible for Medicaid waiver coverage, as many states do not determine eligibility until a waiver slot becomes available. As of 2016, [just over half \(53%\) of waivers with waiting lists screened individuals for eligibility before being placed or while on a waiting list.](#)

However, most people on HCBS waiver waiting lists are receiving other Medicaid services. [Nearly 90 percent of waivers with waiting lists provided non-waiver services](#) (i.e., Medicaid state plan services, such as personal care) to people who were waiting for waiver services.



**Table 1: Medicaid Section 1915 (c) and 1115 Waiver Waiting List Enrollment  
By Target Population and State, 2016**

State	I/DD	Seniors	Seniors/ Phys. Dis.	Phys. Dis.	Children	HIV/ AIDS	Mental Health	TBI/ SCI	Total
<b>EXPANSION STATES</b>									
Alaska	535	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	535
Arizona	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Arkansas	3,221	-	-	-	57	-	-	-	3,278
California	-	1,898	-	2,100	20	70	0	0	4,088
Colorado	2,869	-	-	-	325	-	-	-	3,194
Connecticut	1,649	-	-	1,000	204	-	-	50	2,903
Delaware	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
DC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Hawaii	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Illinois	8,470	-	-	-	10,693	-	-	-	19,163
Indiana	1,584	-	-	-	-	-	-	43	1,627
Iowa	2,427	-	-	4,352	-	-	1,257	892	8,928
Kentucky	8,181	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	8,190
Louisiana	17,590	-	47,876	-	8,463	-	-	-	73,929
Maryland	7,864	23,000	-	-	5,292	-	-	-	36,156
Massachusetts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Michigan	-	-	3,311	-	-	-	-	-	3,311
Minnesota	121	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	128
Montana	1,130	-	-	-	117	-	62	-	1,309
Nevada	752	449	-	171	-	-	-	-	1,372
New Hampshire	151	-	11	-	78	-	-	20	260
New Jersey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
New Mexico*	3,700	-	16,370	-	-	-	-	-	20,070
New York	-	-	-	-	Unknown	-	Unknown	-	0
North Dakota	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Ohio	64,546	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64,546
Oregon	-	-	-	-	134	-	-	-	134
Pennsylvania	9,728	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,728
Rhode Island	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Vermont	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Washington	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
West Virginia	1,260	-	274	-	-	-	-	6	1,540
<b>Total Expansion State Waiting List Enrollment</b>	<b>135,778</b>	<b>25,347</b>	<b>67,842</b>	<b>7,630</b>	<b>25,386</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>264,392</b>
<b>NON-EXPANSION STATES</b>									
Alabama	Unknown	-	5,080	204	-	-	-	-	5,284
Florida	20,751	0	46,412	-	-	-	-	315	67,479
Georgia	8,698	-	1,468	104	-	-	-	-	10,270
Idaho	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Kansas	3,452	-	-	438	-	-	-	-	3,890
Maine	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000
Mississippi	1,441	-	6,958	1,013	-	-	-	69	9,481
Missouri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Nebraska	2,062	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,062
North Carolina	10,000	-	2,068	-	-	-	-	-	12,068
Oklahoma	7,538	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	7,569

South Carolina	11,275	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11,275
South Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Tennessee	5,813	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,813
Texas*	196,248	-	16,599	-	19,221	-	-	-	232,068
Utah	2,387	-	-	-	64	-	-	92	2,543
Virginia	16,583	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,583
Wisconsin	507	-	1,235	-	2,474	-	-	-	4,216
Wyoming	202	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	202
<b>Total Non-Expansion State Waiting List Enrollment</b>	<b>287,957</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>79,851</b>	<b>1,759</b>	<b>21,759</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>392,253</b>

NOTES: Data may not sum to total due to rounding. I/DD – Intellectual/Developmental Disability; TBI/SCI – Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury. “Unknown” indicates there was a waiting list but number of persons is unknown. A dash indicates that there was no operational § 1915(c) waiver for the target enrollment group or waiting list. AZ, RI, and VT do not have § 1915(c) waivers but provide similar HCBS in §1115. \*NM and TX reported waiting lists for seniors/physical disabilities in their §1115 waivers. SOURCE: KFF analysis of Medicaid HCBS Program survey.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> New York is categorized as “no change” because it reports a waiver waiting list but did not report the number of individuals on the waiting list in 2015 or 2016.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this analysis, Maine is considered a non-expansion state because it has not yet implemented the expansion.

<sup>3</sup> Most expansion states have opted to “align” their expansion adult benefit package with their traditional state plan benefit package, by offering all state plan services to expansion adults if medically necessary. [Previous analysis](#) shows that nearly six in 10 (57%) nonelderly Medicaid adults have a disability but do not receive federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) cash assistance benefits, meaning that they are eligible for Medicaid through another pathway, such as the Medicaid expansion in states that have adopted that pathway.

<sup>4</sup> For purposes of this analysis, Maine is considered a non-expansion state because it has not yet implemented the expansion.

<sup>5</sup> Indiana implemented expansion in 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Medicaid expansion coverage became effective on January 1, 2014 in 25 states. Two states implemented in 2014 (Michigan, April 1, 2014; and New Hampshire, August 15, 2014). Three states implemented in 2015 (Pennsylvania, January 1, 2015; Indiana, February 1, 2015; and Alaska, September 1, 2015). Two states implemented in 2016 (Montana, January 1, 2016; and Louisiana, July 1, 2016). Maine has adopted but not yet implemented expansion.