

As UT Awaits Medicaid-Plan Approval, Voters Could Make the Call

Voters in Utah will decide whether to expand Medicaid health coverage to people making up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$16,750 a year. (Morgan/Flickr)

Link: <https://www.publicnewsservice.org/2018-08-08/health-issues/as-ut-awaits-medicaid-plan-approval-voters-could-make-the-call/a63626-1>

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SALT LAKE CITY - It probably will be November before Utahns know if or how much Medicaid will be expanded in the state.

The Trump administration reportedly is [delaying](#) decisions on states' Medicaid-expansion requests until after the midterm elections. In those midterms, Utah voters could pass a larger Medicaid-expansion package than the one state lawmakers have approved. The plan on the ballot would cover about 150,000 people, while the Legislature's plan would cover about 70,000 - and require most Medicaid recipients to have jobs.



Stacy Stanford, a policy analyst for the Utah Health Policy Project, said she thinks it's likely that voters will get their say first.

"Utah voters get to get out there," she said, "and decide, 'Hey, we want full Medicaid expansion without strings attached.' "

[The latest poll from the Salt Lake Tribune and the Hinckley Institute of Politics](#) found that about 54 percent of Utah voters favor the ballot initiative, even though it requires a 0.15 percent tax increase.

Groups including the ACLU of Utah are speaking out against the state plan because of its proposed work requirement. Stanford said most people covered by Medicaid already are working if they're able, so adding a work requirement would create more paperwork and could prevent people from accessing care.

"We do know, based on extensive research," she said, "that work requirements are largely solving a problem that doesn't exist."

A federal judge in July struck down a Kentucky Medicaid-expansion plan that had attempted to add similar work stipulations for Medicaid recipients.

Reporting on the Trump administration delay from The New York Times is online at [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), and the Utah voter poll from the Salt Lake Tribune is at [sltrib.com](https://www.sltrib.com).