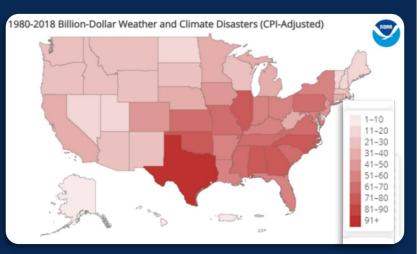
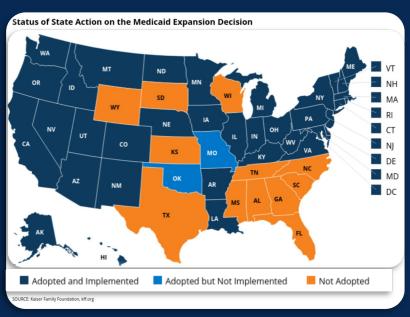
Climate Change's Impacts May Necessitate Innovative Delivery Models in US Healthcare Systems





UtahStateUniversity

Investigative Question

What effects could climate change have on US
Healthcare?

Introduction (see pictures on left)

- Focused on South/South Eastern states because of the prevalence of climate change driven disasters
- These states have similar perceptions on healthcare evident through their rate of Medicaid expansion
- Narrowed research to understand climate change effect on the Medicaid programs within southern nonexpansion states

Methods

Research question-driven based in interdisciplinary security studies.

- Approached through lens of anticipatory intelligence
- Used the 4R Resilience Framework, analyzing a system's resilience to threats such as Climate Change
- Drew information from two large-scale Pew Research population studies, KFF research, Federal research reports on climate change, news reports and voting records of current state politicians, and interviews with subject matter experts

Findings

Healthcare/Climate Change

- 7 hurricanes/tropical storms hit these states in 2020 that each caused several billion dollars in damages
- Covid-19 pandemic has led 14+ states to cut funding to Medicaid or reduce Medicaid coverage.
- Covid 19 is more severe than natural disasters, but reports indicate the Federal government will contribute less funds in future natural disasters, increasing financial pressures on states
- 7 of 8 states most affected by climate change are also 7 of 12 states who have not expanded Medicaid
 - TX, MS, AL, GA, FL, SC, NC are all expected to experience significant increases in climate related costs

Medicaid

- Medicaid is a state-run program, allowing each state to choose who is eligible and what medical costs will be covered
- Runs countercyclically, meaning that when a state experiences financial pressures (usually economic downturns or disasters) more people qualify and program costs increase.
 - This can cause significant strain on state budgets, as is evident from the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Medicaid accounts for 15.9% of state budgets, second only to education (24.5%), and is a frequent source of budgetary concern and budget cuts

Findings (continued)

Ideologies/Framing

- All 7 indicated states contain Republican controlled legislatures, indicating strong political preference to maintain current Medicaid conditions
 - Of the 7 states mentioned in this study, only Alabama has indicated the possibility of expanding Medicaid soon, despite large Federal incentives
- Democratic views prioritize healthcare access over cost while Republican views emphasize quality
 Jobs/education as a pathway to healthcare coverage over government programs
- Dr. Aaron Carroll, a health policy and finance reform researcher, suggests political debates ignore tradeoffs of Medicaid expansion/non-expansion, and instead frame the program as "perfect" or "wholly destructive".
 - Analysis of current state/national politicians and debate over Medicaid finds this to be true

Climate Change's Risk to Medicaid

- Climate Change's risk to Medicaid is that its financial burden will cause program cuts and make expansion costs inhibitory to non-expansion states
- Political ideology plays a significant role in the future Medicaid will have as a healthcare delivery model in these states

Potential Innovation

- Shifting Medicaid from a state-run program to a Federal program with state financing could reduce the countercyclical challenges of Medicaid. Because states can't run deficits, the countercyclical nature of Medicaid poses a large challenge when paired with Climate Change costs
 - The Federal government is allowed to run deficits, making it possible to adjust to the countercyclical nature of Medicaid
- Reapportionment of Federal Medicaid funds when states experience large scale climate related disasters could alleviate added financial burdens experienced by coastal southern coastal states
- Accurate framing of the tradeoffs of Medicaid and Medicaid expansion would facilitate more productive political discussion

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