



MEDICAID 'OPTIONAL' SERVICES

COST-EFFECTIVE & NECESSARY CARE FOR LOW-INCOME UTAHNS

A Utah Health Policy Project Fact Sheet

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Restore 'Optional Services' to achieve true cost containment in Medicaid Reform

As the state of Utah moves towards Medicaid Reform, with the primary goal of cost containment in our Medicaid budget we must look towards restoring funding to critical services that will be vital to accomplish true cost containment. Without these services, the state will fall short on several key goals of Medicaid reform, including: medical homes, reliable access to primary care, and emergency room avoidance.

Critical Service	State \$ FY2011	Consequences & Observations
Vision Care	\$187,084	-recipients will have difficulty remaining in or returning to the workforce -some recipients will be a danger on the road!
Dental	2.8 Million	- Restoring dental benefits for adult Medicaid recipients will help assure their oral health. - Chronic periodontal infections are associated with major systemic diseases: diabetes mellitus, heart disease and stroke, premature births, and respiratory infections. - When Medicaid eligible individuals do not receive basic oral health services, their untreated dental disease progresses until it ultimately requires complicated and expensive medical treatment; that cost is then borne by Medicaid.
Audiology/ Hearing	\$134,644	-hearing-impaired recipients will have difficulty getting or holding a job -hearing aids are not affordable for those without coverage.

The Bottom Line

- The label of "optional" is misleading: "optional" services are medically necessary for those who use them. Most states cover the optional services that have been targeted for elimination in Utah.²
- Eighty three percent of Medicaid spending on low-income elderly adults represents spending on optional services and/or beneficiaries. 66% of spending on people with disabilities represents optional services or eligibility. These populations, by definition, have no other access to care.
- Utah ranks 45th in state Medicaid spending (near the bottom).

1. These figures reflect the number of Utahns who have utilized the given service.

2. Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, "Medicaid Mandatory and 'Optional' Eligibility and Benefits (policy brief), www.kff.org.