

Healthy Opportunities Pilots



North Carolina's Healthy Opportunities Pilots reduced Medicaid health care costs an average of \$164 per beneficiary, per month for the 31,597 people enrolled, relative to what would have occurred without HOP participation. The savings were driven by a significant shift in patient care from Emergency Departments and inpatient hospital admissions to outpatient provider care. Participants also experienced a decrease in food, housing, and transportation needs.

The findings are from a multi-year evaluation completed by Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina (the Sheps Center).

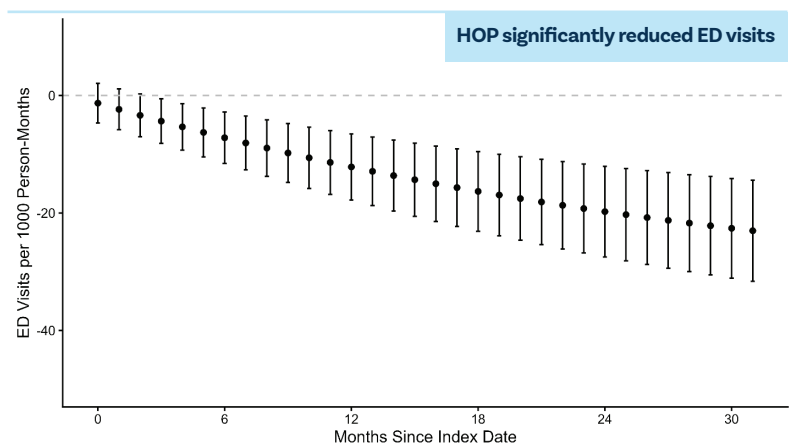
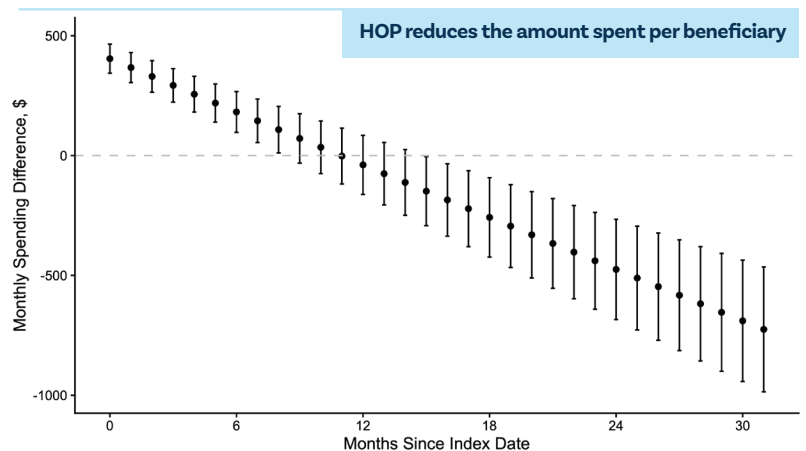
Healthy Opportunities Pilots (HOP)

The Healthy Opportunities Pilots (HOP) is the nation's first comprehensive initiative to test and evaluate how using Medicaid funding to pay for targeted, evidence-based services such as housing, food, transportation, and interpersonal safety, can improve health outcomes and reduce Medicaid healthcare costs.

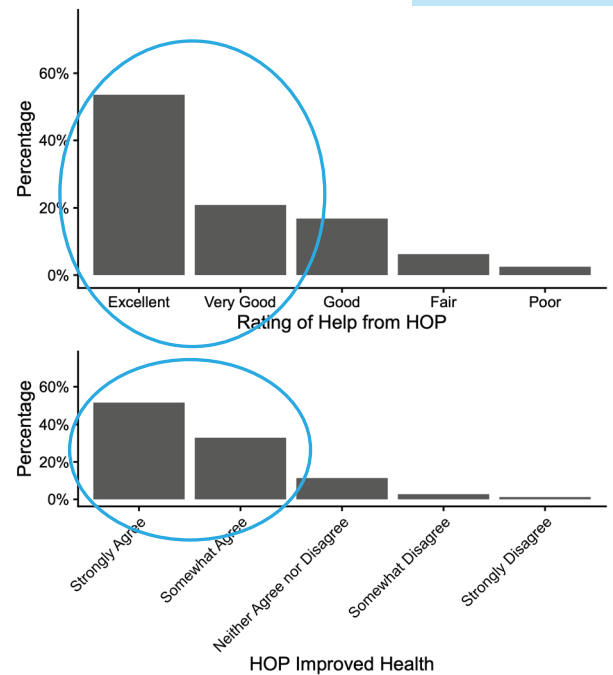
The Results

These findings are from the time service began on March 15, 2022, through November 30, 2024.

- **Lower spending.** Medicaid spending for HOP participants decreased by an average of **\$164 per person each month**, compared to expected costs without HOP. **This savings is inclusive of the cost of service and administrative overhead.** While costs increased at the beginning of the program, savings grew steadily over time.
- **More cost-effective care.** Healthcare use shifted away from expensive hospital care and toward lower cost outpatient care. HOP participants had significantly fewer emergency department visits and hospital stays, and more visits with outpatient providers compared to what would have happened without HOP.
- **Reduced barriers to health and wellbeing.** HOP services were associated with fewer challenges that can affect health and well-being. HOP participants experienced lower rates of food insecurity, housing instability, and transportation barriers than would have been expected if they had not participated, and the magnitude of the difference increased over time.



- **Improved quality of life.** 89% of participants surveyed at 6 months said HOP improved their health. In interviews, participants reported greater security and reduced stress, as well as a positive impact on their or their children's health. The evaluation did not find meaningful changes in measures such as low birth weight, blood pressure, or blood sugar levels. Data limitations make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about HOP's impact on these outcomes.
- **Strong network coordination.** HOP organizations said that strong communication across healthcare providers, network leads who served as regional connectors, community organizations, and participants helped improve outreach, engagement, and enrollment. Stable funding for services and organizational capacity also helped support the network. However, limited-service availability sometimes made it difficult to meet participants' needs quickly and effectively.



Evaluation Series

This report is part of a multi-step evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the Healthy Opportunities Pilots. HOP evaluation reports include:

- **The [Rapid Cycle Assessment](#)** assessed the initial HOP implementation approach, enabling the State to modify the program to ensure the successful long-term operation of its infrastructure.
- **The [Interim Evaluation Report](#)** summarized early program findings from program launch, March 15, 2022, through November 30, 2023. This report provided directional indicators of program successes to help guide service delivery and programmatic adjustments.
- **The [Summative Evaluation Report](#)** summarizes HOP data from program launch through November 30, 2024, summarizing findings for the first waiver period.

HOP Today

Federal authority for the Healthy Opportunities Pilots continues through December 2029. However, the program has been suspended. Like all Medicaid programs, the majority of the costs are paid for by the federal government, with the remainder paid by the state. The North Carolina General Assembly has not continued to fund the state portion of HOP.

