

Massachusetts: Map for Missouri?

Comparing the Health Landscapes

In April 2006, the Massachusetts Legislature passed and Governor Mitt Romney signed into law legislation (An Act Promoting Access to Health Care) expanding health coverage to the uninsured and the underinsured through a range of initiatives. As this state begins implementing these health care reforms, other states will look to Massachusetts as a possible model. “The Missouri Health Landscape,” the first in a series of reports prepared for the Missouri Foundation for Health by researchers at Saint Louis University, compares Missouri and Massachusetts environments in relation to the applicability of this new health care legislation. These findings highlight similarities and differences between Missouri and Massachusetts on key empirical dimensions. Major findings from this report include:

Economic and Demographic Comparisons

- ◆ Massachusetts has a lower percentage of the population living in poverty than Missouri.
- ◆ Massachusetts’ share of children living in poverty is smaller than Missouri (15% vs. 21%).
- ◆ Massachusetts has a greater share of elderly living in poverty than Missouri (16% vs. 11%).
- ◆ In March 2005, Massachusetts had a slightly lower unemployment rate than Missouri (4.9% vs. 5.5%), though at the time both states had approximately the same number of unemployed workers.
- ◆ Missouri’s Gross State Product is approximately two-thirds the size of Massachusetts.
- ◆ Federal and state tax collections are greater in Massachusetts than in Missouri (Massachusetts has a higher individual tax rate than Missouri).
- ◆ Massachusetts and Missouri spend similar shares of their general revenues on Medicaid. In terms of total dollars, Missouri spends only one-third (\$1,097) of what Massachusetts spends (\$2,908).

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Insurance Coverage

- ◆ Between 2003 and 2004, the uninsurance rate for the non-elderly in Massachusetts and Missouri was similar (13.6% vs. 12.7%).
- ◆ A smaller proportion of Massachusetts' uninsured adults live in poverty as compared to Missouri (31.2% vs. 37.1%)
- ◆ Insurance coverage rates for children living in poverty are comparable: 16.3 percent in Missouri and 16 percent in Massachusetts.
- ◆ Between 2000 and 2004, as a result of economic difficulties, employer-sponsored insurance in Missouri declined.

Medicaid and Public Funding

- ◆ Missouri's State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) covers a higher proportion of children through Medicaid than does the Massachusetts program.
- ◆ In the 1990s, Missouri and Massachusetts used waivers to expand Medicaid eligibility. However, as a result of 2005 legislative changes in Missouri, adult eligibility levels were lower and over 130,000 Missourians have lost insurance coverage.
- ◆ While Missouri operates a high risk pool (Missouri Health Insurance Pool) to help the uninsured, Massachusetts operates a variety of pools and subsidies to assist the uninsured and underinsured, including an Uncompensated Care Pool which provides funds up to \$1 billion annually for uncompensated care. Missouri has no such earmarked pool of funding for uncompensated care.

Subsequent reports will outline the Massachusetts proposal, compare and contrast Missouri's current health care situation with that in Massachusetts, and explore in greater detail the challenge of translating one state's model into another environment.