
Medicaid in N.Y. costs millions more than in other states

In the past 18 years, Medicaid has gone from a bold plan to guarantee medical care for the poor to a program gobbling up more and more tax dollars every year. Nowhere is that problem more apparent than in New York state.

This, the first of a two-part series, examines the financial problems facing New York because of the Medicaid system that developed in the state.

By **DAVID EGNER**

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York has the Cadillac of health care systems for the poor — big, loaded with options, guzzling cash faster than any other state's program.

The cost of Medicaid — the government program that pays for medical care for the poor — is hundreds of dollars higher in New York per recipient than in

any other state, a survey by the federal Department of Health and Human Services has found.

"New York has a long tradition of providing more benefits to the poor than other states," said Peter Slocum, spokesman for the state Health Department. "We provide many services under Medicaid that other states don't provide."

And while 25 states now require Medicaid recipients to pay a small share of some medical and dental bills to discourage overuse of the system, New York is not among them.

In addition to getting more free services, poor New Yorkers get sick more often, stay in hospitals and nursing homes longer, and run up higher medical bills than most other needy Americans, federal statistics show.

As the price of Medicaid rises

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