

Gov. Mike DeWine on potential Medicaid cuts: 'We don't know what the federal government is going to do'

By **Nathan Hart**
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Ohio would have to make "very difficult" choices if federal lawmakers enact cuts to Medicaid's expanded eligibility, Gov. Mike DeWine said Wednesday at a Columbus Metropolitan Club event.

The state expanded Medicaid eligibility in 2014, enrolling an additional 770,000 Ohioans. Nationally, 72 million Americans are insured by the program.

Now, federal lawmakers continue to consider changes and cuts to Medicaid as a possible way to fund President Donald Trump's agenda. Ohio representatives, for their part, are considering a measure in their version of the state budget bill that would repeal Ohio's Medicaid expansion if federal assistance for the program drops below 90%.

When asked if he supported the bill's "trigger language" that would take effect if the federal assistance drops, he said it was a question of what happens at the federal level.

"What we don't know is what the federal government is going to do, and the federal government is paying virtually all of this expansion," DeWine said. "Now if they change the numbers or they stop paying, then obviously we will have to make some very, very difficult choices that, frankly, we do not want to have to make.

"So, I'm not going to make any commitment of what we're going to do until I see what the numbers are coming out of the federal government."

Could Ohio impose a work requirement for Medicaid?

[The state is also looking to impose a work requirement](#) on recipients of Medicaid's expanded benefits. Ohio lawmakers first passed a Medicaid work requirement in 2017, which was approved by the first Trump administration in 2019. The requirement [was later revoked by the Biden administration in 2021](#).

At least 61,000 Ohioans could lose their insurance if the Trump administration approves Ohio's request, which it filed at the end of February.

DeWine touted the work requirement as an example of how the state is helping Ohioans reach their full potential.

"We shouldn't look at it so much as a work requirement and as something that's punitive. That's not what we're talking about," DeWine said. "What we're talking about is, we want them to be part of society fully. We want them to be able to live and to be able to participate. And if we can help them do that, that's what we should be doing."

Will DeWine sign SB1?

[DeWine also said at the event that he would "probably" sign Senate Bill 1](#), a controversial higher education bill that would eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion and ban faculty strikes at Ohio's public universities, among other changes.

He added that he would be open to re-examining the law if it has unintended consequences.

"I think with any bill, you're always open and I think as a state, we should always be open to re-examining everything," he said.

USA TODAY Network Ohio Bureau Reporter Erin Glynn contributed to this story.