Has Medicaid expansion increased outpatient mental health care availability?

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Mental Health Provider Access
- 117M people in MH workforce shortage areas
- 70% of communities have no MH care in 10 mi

Medicaid Expansion
- Adults at or below 138% FPL Medicaid eligible
- 145% increase in Medicaid funding for depression treatment (2007-2015)
METHODS

Two-part Model
1. Likelihood of having ≥1 outpatient MH facility
2. Number of outpatient MH facilities per capita (log)

Control Variables
- Medicaid eligibility based on income
- Unemployment
- Mental illness prevalence
- Bachelor’s education
- Race and ethnicity
- Elected official ideology
- County and quarter-year fixed effects
RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Mixed Findings
1. Unchanged likelihood of having ≥1 MH facility in areas with inconsistent availability of outpatient MH care
2. Increased number of MH facilities per capita in areas with consistent availability of outpatient MH care

Policy Significance
- Medicaid expansion had positive downstream effects on outpatient MH care availability
- Targeted policies are needed to make outpatient MH care available in many areas (1,185 counties)

Why do areas lack mental health care?


