

# Medicaid Coverage for Heart Transplantation: The Role of State Policies in Improving Access to Heart Transplantation

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## BACKGROUND

Policies at every level including federal, state, and transplant center policies play a role in the accessibility of heart transplantation (HT). For individuals aged 21 and older, organ transplant services are not mandatory covered services under Title XIX. States have discretion to choose whether transplants will be covered under Medicaid policies. The purpose of the current study was to examine the landscape of Medicaid HT coverage.

## METHODS

State-level data regarding demographics, socioeconomic variables (such as those living at or below the federal poverty level, median household income, and primary residence zip code) as well as race/ethnicity of Medicaid constituents was obtained from KFF: State Health Facts. All government websites were searched to determine if state Medicaid programs covered adult HT. .

## RESULTS

Three states (Georgia, Montana, and Nevada) do not cover HT for adults with Medicaid although both Montana and Nevada are Medicaid expansion states. Among these states, Georgia has 2 HT centers; Montana and Nevada have none.

**Three states in the U.S. do not cover heart transplantation for adults with Medicaid.**

**This lack of coverage disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minority groups.**

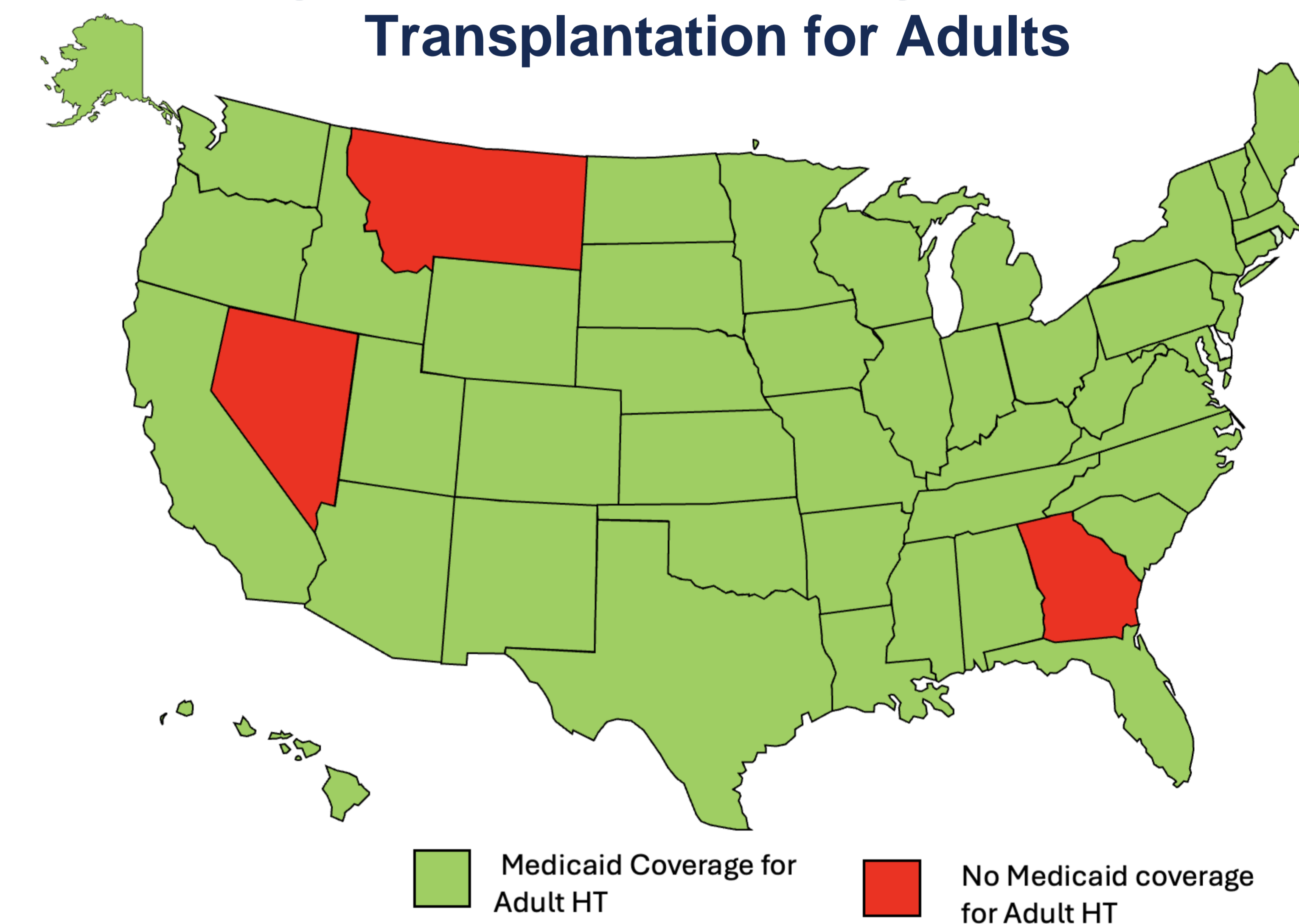
**Advocacy efforts are needed to improve coverage and make access to transplant more equitable.**

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## RESULTS (CONT.)

In Georgia, Black individuals compose 30% of the population compared to 11% of all the other states combined. Similarly, median annual household income in Georgia is \$66,559 compared to \$68,297 in all other states combined. Fourteen percent of Georgians live under the federal poverty level. Among those that meet the poverty level, 20% of individuals are Black, 20% are Hispanic, and 27% are American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN). Among the Nonelderly, 26% of Medicaid constituents are Black, 24% are Hispanic, and 35% are AI/AN.

**Figure. Medicaid Coverage for Heart Transplantation for Adults**



## CONCLUSION

These findings highlight that the lack of Medicaid coverage for HT disproportionately impacts racial and ethnic minority groups. Advocacy efforts are required to improve coverage and access for disadvantaged populations.

## DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

The authors have no disclosures relevant to this abstract.