

# Study: Health insurance saves lives

By Noam N. Levey, Los Angeles Times

Giving more people health insurance could save tens of thousands of lives nationwide, according to a new analysis of data from Massachusetts, whose reforms became the model for President Obama's health law.

Throughout the national debate over the Affordable Care Act, critics have questioned whether expanding coverage results in better health. The new analysis adds to the growing evidence that it does.

Mortality rates in Massachusetts measurably improved compared with similar places around the country after the state began guaranteeing its residents health coverage in 2006, according to researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Urban Institute.

The study, published Monday in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, also implicitly warns that gaps among states in the health of their populations may widen in coming years. That divide will result from some states taking advantage of federal money to provide health coverage and others opting out of the system.

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