

# How Medicaid, and its costs, grew in Nevada

By Paul Harasim, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada's Medicaid program, caught in the political crossfire over rising health-care costs, is far different than the limited federal-state health insurance partnership for the "deserving poor" that President Lyndon Johnson unveiled in 1965.

As documented in the first installment of the *Review-Journal's* Hard Medicine series, Nevada has a lot riding on the debate over Medicaid. The Silver State is one of 31 states and the District of Columbia that used a provision of the Affordable Care Act to expand their Medicaid programs. As a result, 637,795 Nevada residents – about 20 percent of the total state population – now get some or all of their health-care costs paid through the program.

Republicans have vowed for years to "repeal and replace" the ACA, better known as Obamacare, which they consider fiscally and socially irresponsible. They have not yet been able to do so, but if they eventually succeed, Nevada will have to replace \$300 million in annual federal Medicaid funding, dump 224,381 people as of March from the program's rolls or find some middle ground that would increase costs and eliminate coverage for fewer recipients.

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