

IDAHO

FALLOUT FROM MEDICAID BUDGET CUTS GROWS



CHRISTINA LORDS, IDAHO CAPITAL SUN

Hundreds of Idahoans gathered in the rotunda of the Idaho Capitol on Jan. 12, 2026, to protest cuts to the state's Medicaid program. The protest, organized by Idaho Voices for Children, took place before the governor's State of the State Address.

Two patients die as mental health providers sound alarm

KYLE PFANNENSTIEL
Idaho Capital Sun

Two months after an Idaho Medicaid contractor cut critical mental health services, officials say the fallout that mental health providers warned about is becoming real.

Two patients died, and crisis centers and jails are strained after patients lost access to a program that brings mobile, specialized mental health care directly to people with severe illness, mental health providers say. Across eastern Idaho, crisis centers are seeing demand spike after the cuts, which also ended peer support services that help people navigate mental health treatment.

Since the cuts, visits to eastern Idaho crisis centers rose 34% in December and 43% in January, compared to the same months a year earlier, said DeVere Hunt, the CEO of Badger Inc., which runs crisis

centers in the region.

"These are individuals that no longer probably have community services that were able to sustain them," Hunt said in an interview.

But some of the consequences of the cuts might be masked, providers say, because many mental health clinics are still providing some mobile treatment out of their own pockets.

"We're getting reports from every county and every region in the state that hospitalizations are up, utilization of the crisis units is up, the jails are struggling to maintain, and that we're getting increases in people being arrested and detained," said Laura Scuri, who co-owns Access Behavioral Health Services in Boise and runs the region's local team on the program that was cut, which is called Assertive Community Treatment, or ACT.

Republican lawmaker works to restore cut Medicaid mental health program

Idaho Medicaid contractor Magellan cut the service in December, after Idaho Gov. Brad Little ordered state agencies to cut spending to avoid a budget shortfall. The Idaho Sheriffs' Association quickly warned that cutting the program would risk public safety, and providers said the cuts would drive up other costs even more.

But as the Idaho Legislature explores cutting state spending more to make room for tax cuts, a Republican state lawmaker from East Idaho plans to propose reinstating the program — and thinking more carefully about future cuts.

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ICE chief defends officers' actions before Congress

Lyons testifies at hearing after federal officers shot, killed two Americans

REBECCA SANTANA AND LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Todd Lyons, the acting head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, defended his agency's officers before Congress on Tuesday, standing behind their tactics and saying they would not be intimidated as they carry out the president's mass deportation plans.

Lyons was one of the three heads of agencies implementing President Donald Trump's immigration agenda to testify in a hearing called after federal officers shot

and killed two Americans.

They faced fierce questioning from Democrats, and support from most Republicans, over how they are prosecuting immigration enforcement inside American cities.

"Let me send a message to anyone who thinks they can intimidate us. You will fail," said Lyons. Lyons, who at various points declined to comment directly on the killings of the two U.S. citizens, said his officers would not be deterred.

"We are only getting started," he said in opening remarks.

Trump's immigration campaign has been heavily scrutinized in recent weeks, especially after the federal agents killed



TOM BRENNER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Todd Lyons, acting director of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, testifies Tuesday on Capitol Hill, Tuesday in Washington.

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