

Influence of Enrollment under the ACA on Food Insecurity



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Abstract

The Affordable Care Act was passed to reduce out-of-pocket costs for health insurance and to increase the number of citizens with healthcare coverage in the US. These cost reductions have not only made healthcare more affordable, but have provided families across the US with the ability to pay for other basic needs. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program is a metric that can be used to quantify the number of families experiencing food insecurity on a state-to-state level. Limited access to food has emerged as a key indicator of health problems such as a higher BMI and behavioral issues. The purpose of this analysis is to assess the correlation between the passage of the ACA and the number of Adults and Children experiencing food insecurity on a state-level basis. This study uses TANF data from the years 2015-2022 and compares these figures to the data of the number of citizens insured on a state level basis from 2015-2022.

Literary Analysis

- 17.5% of non-elderly Americans lacking health insurance in 2009
- Food insecurity has also become a significant public health issue in the country
- From 2008 to 2016, 12% to 15% of families experienced food insecurity. Despite a recent decline, 12.3% of US households were still classified by the US Department of Agriculture as food insecure in 2016.
- 15.6 million households lacked enough access to the amount and quality of food required for a healthy living
- 6.1 million households had extremely low food security, a serious category of food insecurity that frequently causes families to go without food for days at a time
- Food insecurity has been demonstrated to have a detrimental impact on children, who are more likely to have poor health as a result.
- Few studies, if any, have yet looked at potential connections between public healthcare and food insecurity, despite the abundance of literature on both the ACA and food insecurity

Methods

The first step of this research was data collection. TANF was chosen as the basis of measurement for food insecure families. Data was collected from all 50 states over the period 2015-2022. Children and Adult data was separated and compared independently.

The second step was running a correlation, in which TANF data was compared to the number of enrollees under the ACA. Next this comparison was transferred into excel, where the averages for each year were taken of Enrollees, Children and Adults

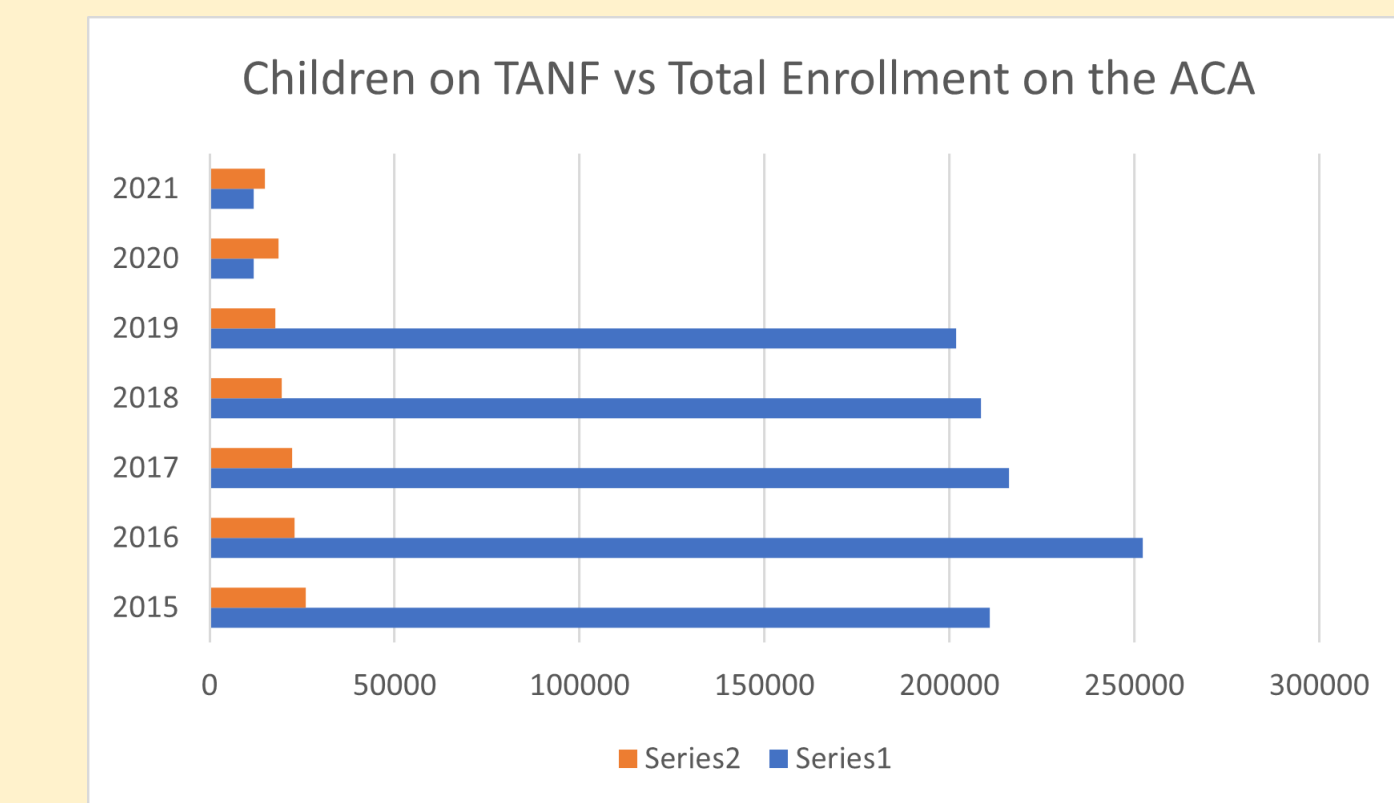
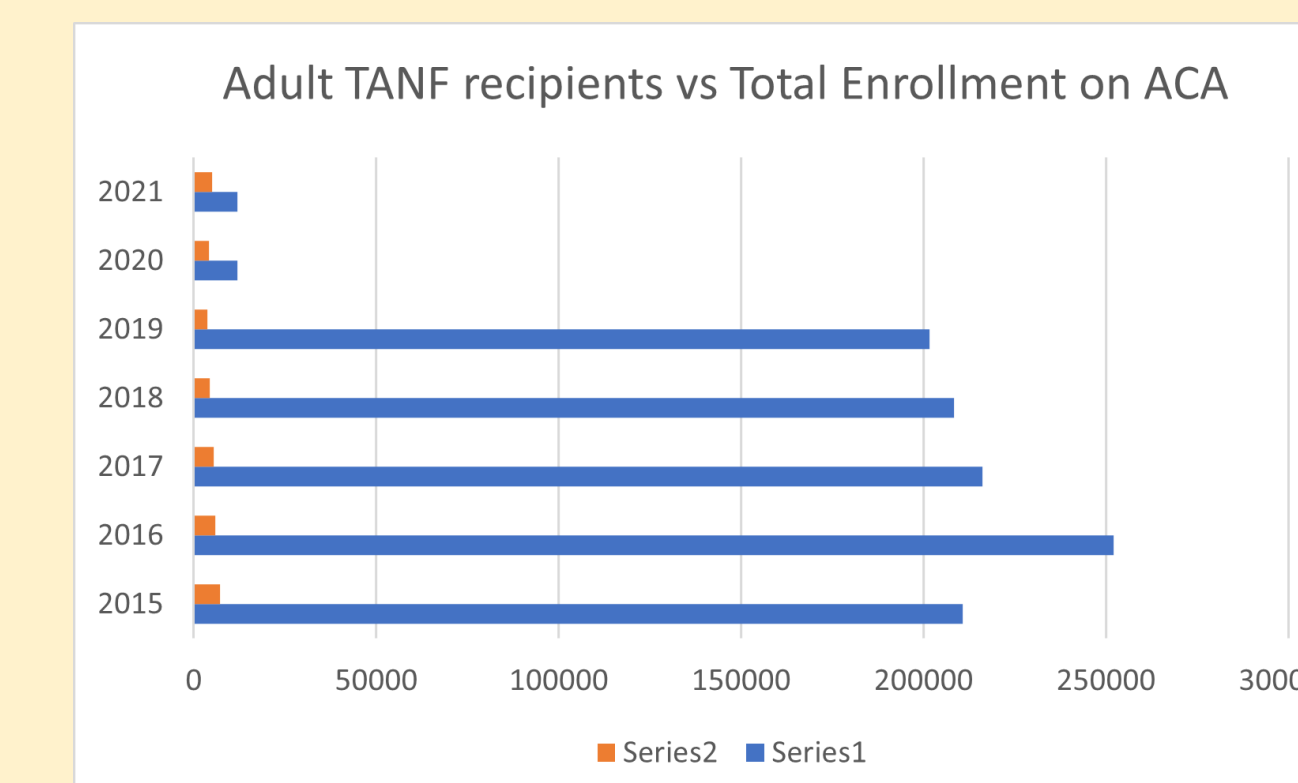
These averages were then transferred into charts for visual analysis

Results

These two graphs show comparisons between the average number of adults and children on TANF each year and the average number of people enrolled from the ACA

These comparisons show that there is an indirect relationship between TANF recipients and ACA enrollees because on years with higher enrollment, there are less children and adults receiving TANF

This indirect relationship means that as more people are insured, there are less people placed on TANF



Conclusions

- A correlation can be found between decreased food insecurity and enrollment in the ACA
- The ACA may have influences beyond number of people in the US who are insured
- For further research I would analyze the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Data

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