

States from Rhode Island to California are being forced to curtail Medicaid, the government health insurance program for the poor, as they struggle to cope with the deteriorating economy.

With revenue falling at the same time that more people are losing their jobs and private health coverage, states already have pared their programs and many are looking at deeper cuts for the coming year. Already, 19 states -- including Maryland and Virginia -- and the District of Columbia have lowered payments to hospitals and nursing homes, eliminated coverage for some treatments, and forced some recipients out of the insurance program completely.

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