



Census Bureau Health Insurance Estimates for 2023: Complex Expectations

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Topics

What we are likely to see
Technical issues
What else was going on

What might we see? What could it mean?

Continued progress
broadening the circle
of health coverage

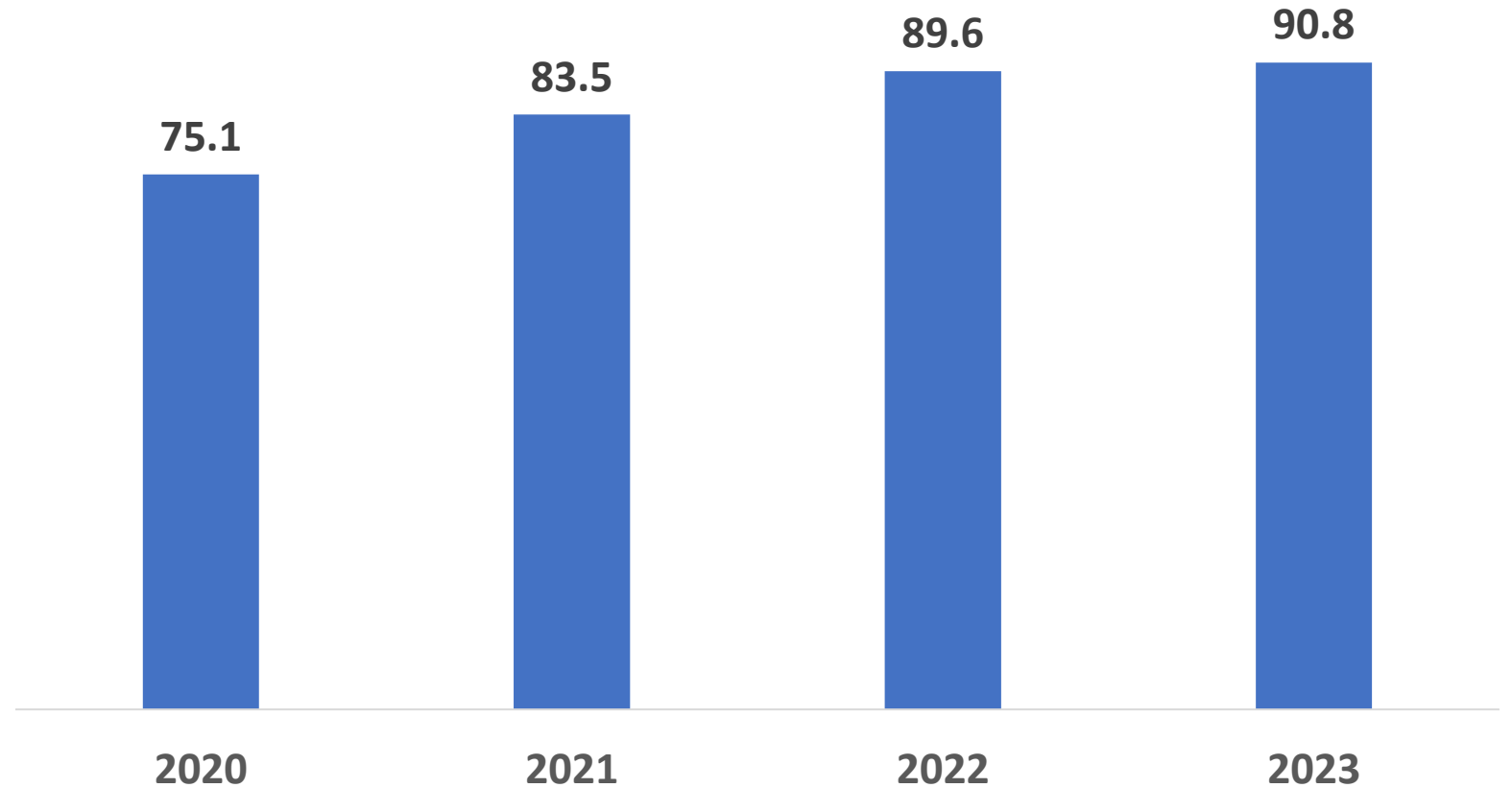
- Greatest number of people with health insurance in American history
- Record highs in Medicaid and Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace enrollment
- Builds on gains in 2021 and 2022

Remarkable story,
given considerable
headwinds

- History's greatest Medicaid losses begin in mid-2023, when pandemic protections expired and many states imposed paperwork burdens that needlessly terminated millions of families' coverage. The number of Medicaid enrollees fell by 9 million from April through December in 2023, and even so, health insurance coverage grew.
- Shows the power of the ACA, enhanced premium tax credits (PTCs) under the American Rescue Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act, plus Biden-Harris administration policies
- Highlights the importance of preventing enhanced PTCs from expiring after 2025, which the Urban Institute [projects](#) would increase the number of uninsured by 4 million.

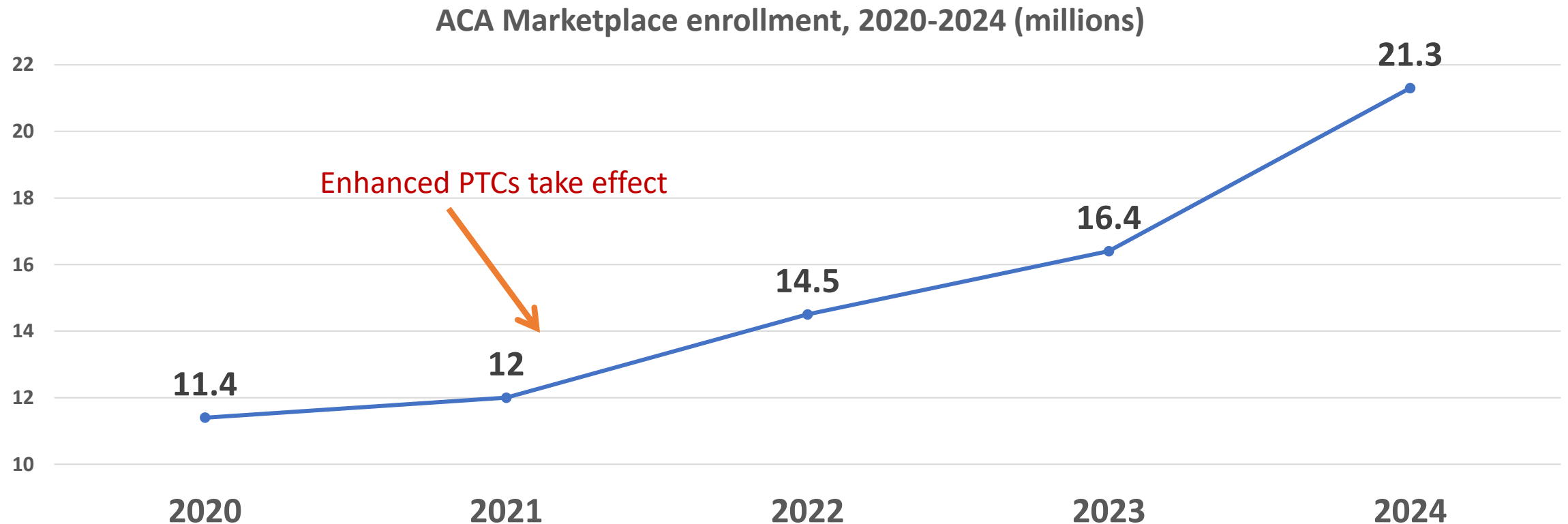
Annual averages of administrative data show Medicaid enrollment rising through 2023

Average 12-month enrollment in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP): 2020-2023 (millions)



Source: Medicaid and Enrollment Trends [Snapshots](#), 2023-2024.

ACA Marketplace enrollment has exploded



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Uncertainties

Medicaid undercount

Always a challenge

Perhaps worse than usual this year

Unusually large changes from month to month in 2023

ACS and CPS-ASEC report one number for the year for each coverage type and geographic area

How surveys count the uninsured

CPS

Asked in March, about previous year

“Were you insured at any point last year?”

ACS

Rolling sample, distributed across the year

“Are you insured now?”

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Medicaid unwinding



During public health emergency

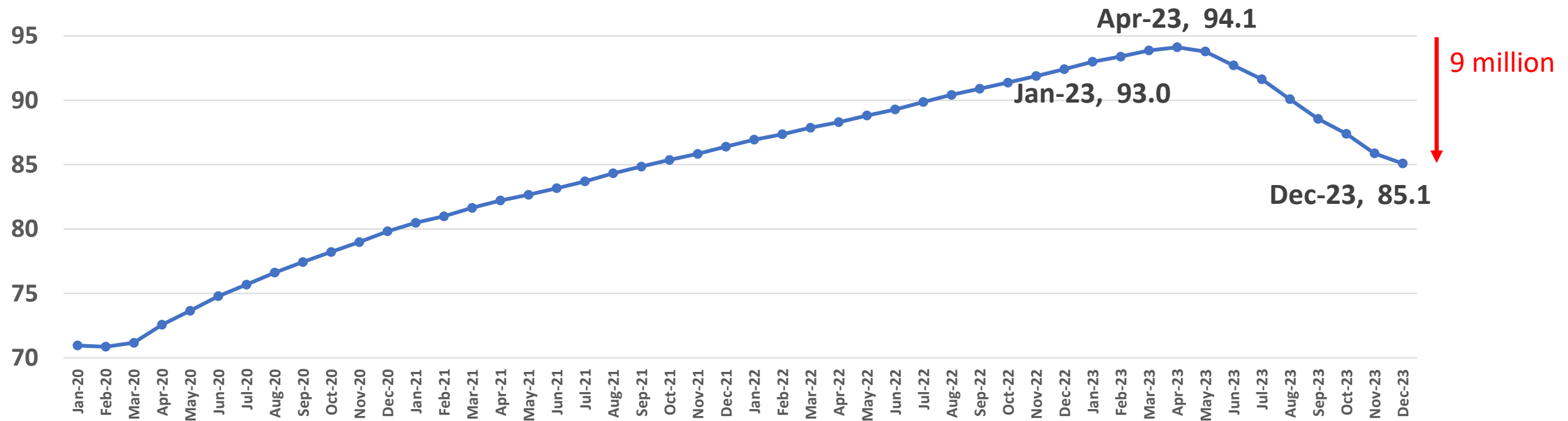
- States received extra federal money
- To qualify for the money, states could not terminate anyone from Medicaid or certain kinds of CHIP
- Continuous coverage requirement ended 4/23
- Medicaid/CHIP grew from 71 million in 2/20 to 94 million in 4/23

Variation by state and time

- Different states started “unwinding” continuous coverage in different months
- States took very different approaches from one another and changed policy and practice over time

Medicaid and CHIP enrollment changed over time, before and during 2023

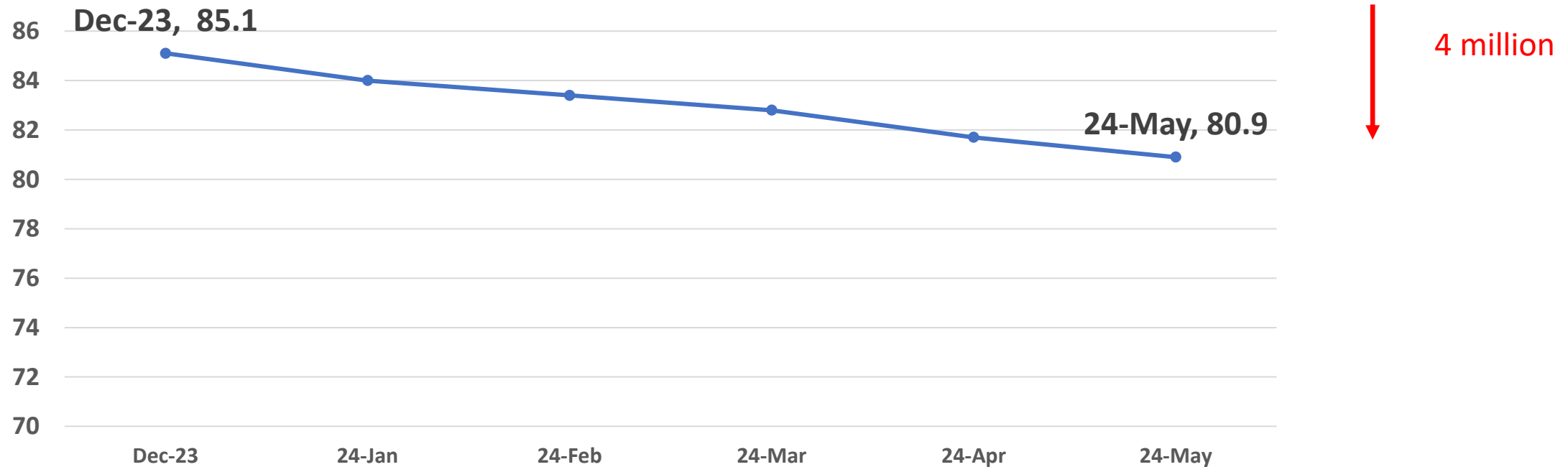
Total Medicaid and CHIP enrollment, by month: January 2020 – December 2023 (millions)



Source: Medicaid and Enrollment Trends [Snapshots](#), 2023-2024.

Medicaid enrollment continued to fall in 2024

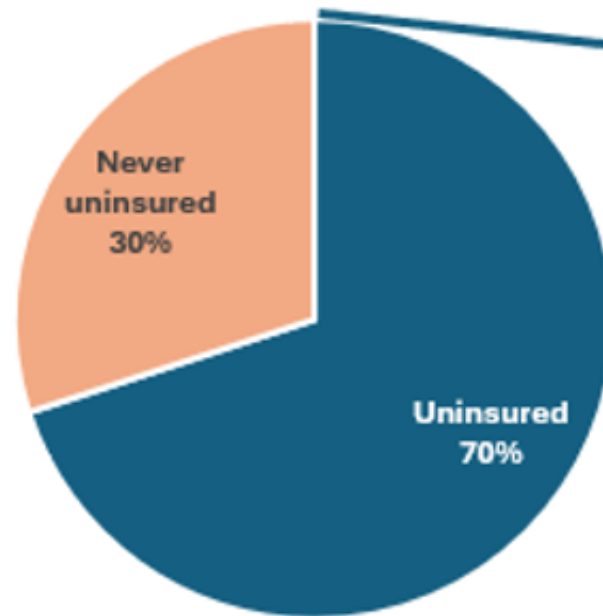
Total Medicaid and CHIP enrollment, by month: December 2023-May 2024 (millions)



Most people terminated from Medicaid become uninsured, at least briefly, and some for many months

Health insurance gaps among people disenrolled from Medicaid during unwinding

Percentage of disenrolled people who became uninsured

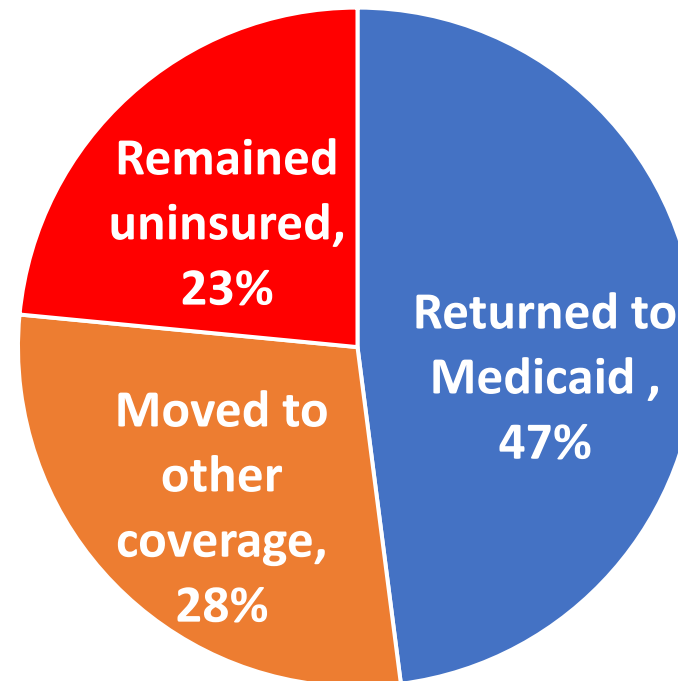


Months without coverage among people who became uninsured



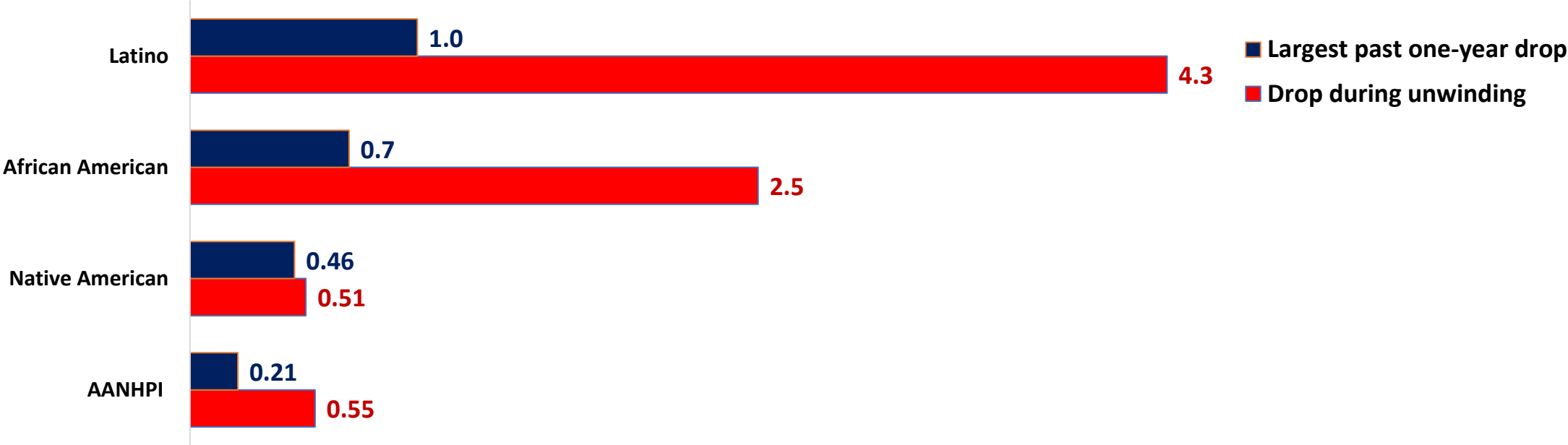
Almost one
in four
people losing
Medicaid
remained
uninsured

Coverage transitions following Medicaid termination during unwinding



Communities of color experienced history's largest Medicaid losses

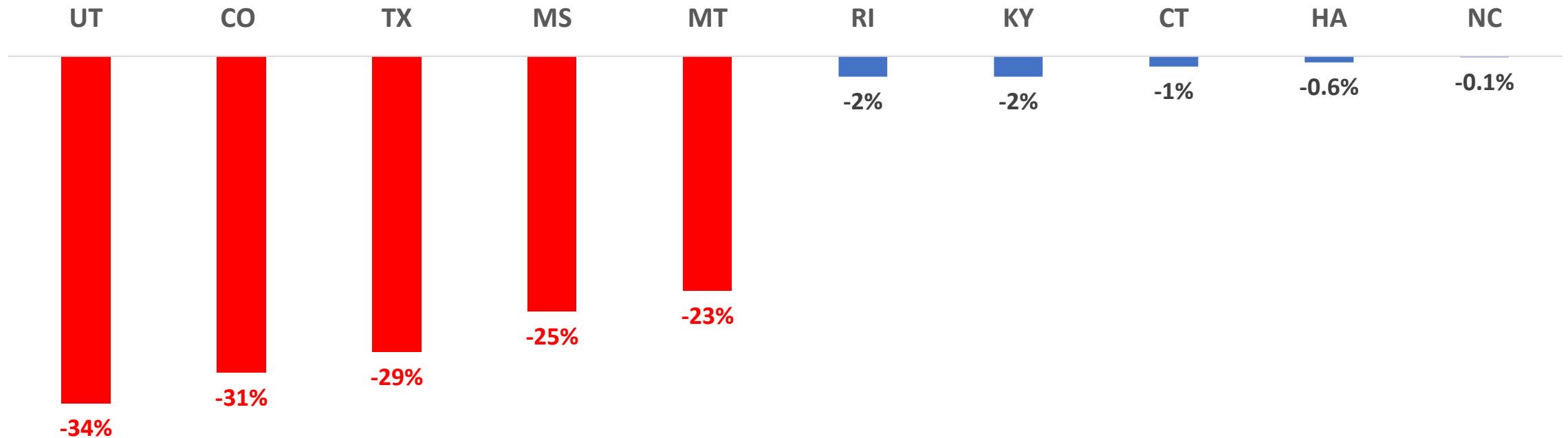
Medicaid losses for people of color: unwinding vs. largest previous one-year decline (millions of people)



Source: UnidosUS calculations based on NCUIH analysis of 2021 ACS data; and CCF compilation of changes to Medicaid enrollment, July 2024; 1979-2008 March CPS data; 2008-2022 ACS data, accessed via IPUMS. Notes: Latinos are people of every race and ethnicity. African Americans are people who identify as non-Hispanic and Black. AANHPI are non-Hispanic Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. Native Americans include people who also identify as other races and people who identify with Hispanic ethnicity. The largest prior one-year loss experienced by each group took place in 1996, except with Latinos, for whom the largest prior loss took place in 2019.

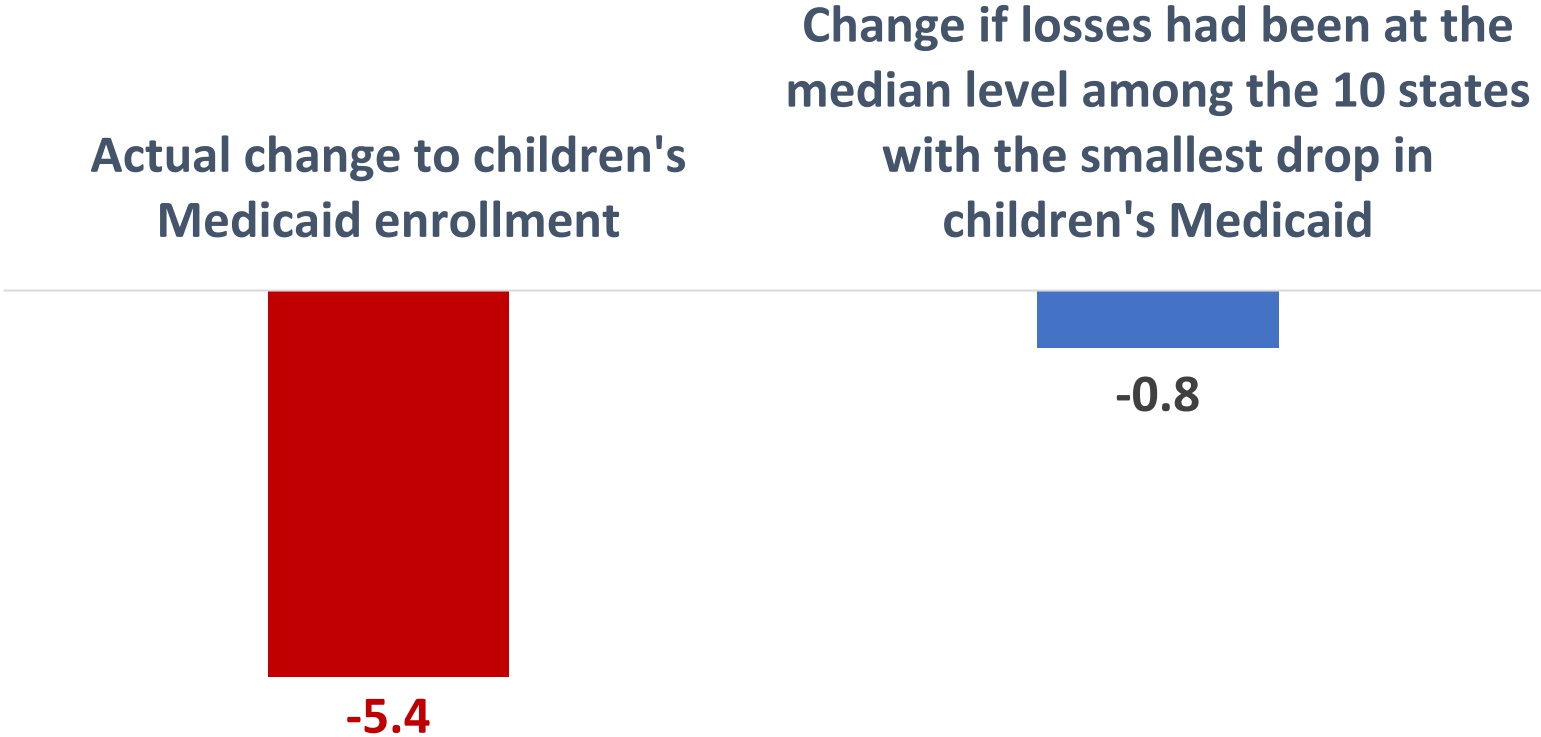
Medicaid losses varied wildly among states

Percentage drops in children's Medicaid coverage during unwinding: The five states with the highest losses vs. the five states with the lowest losses



Change to children's Medicaid coverage: actual vs. if all states had protected coverage as well as the best (millions of children)

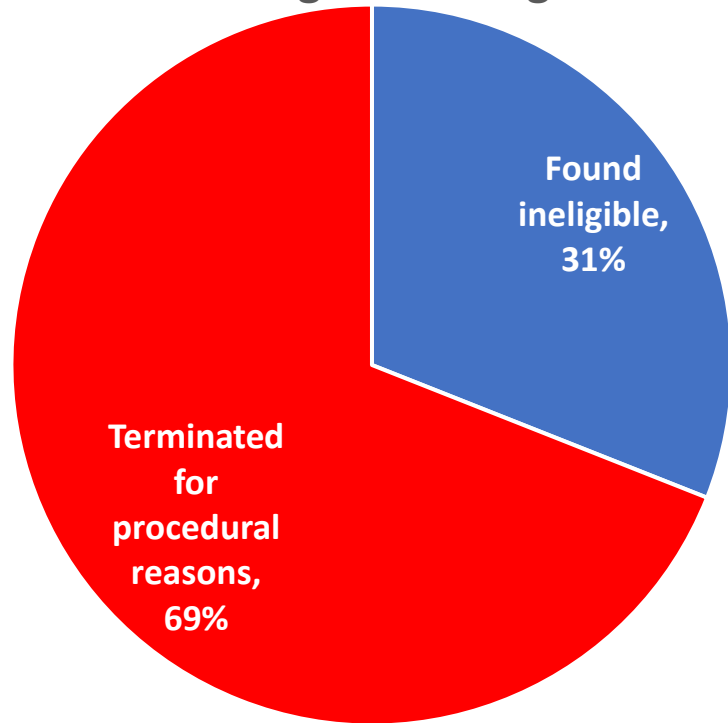
Most
Medicaid
losses would
have been
prevented if
all states
had done as
well as the
10 best



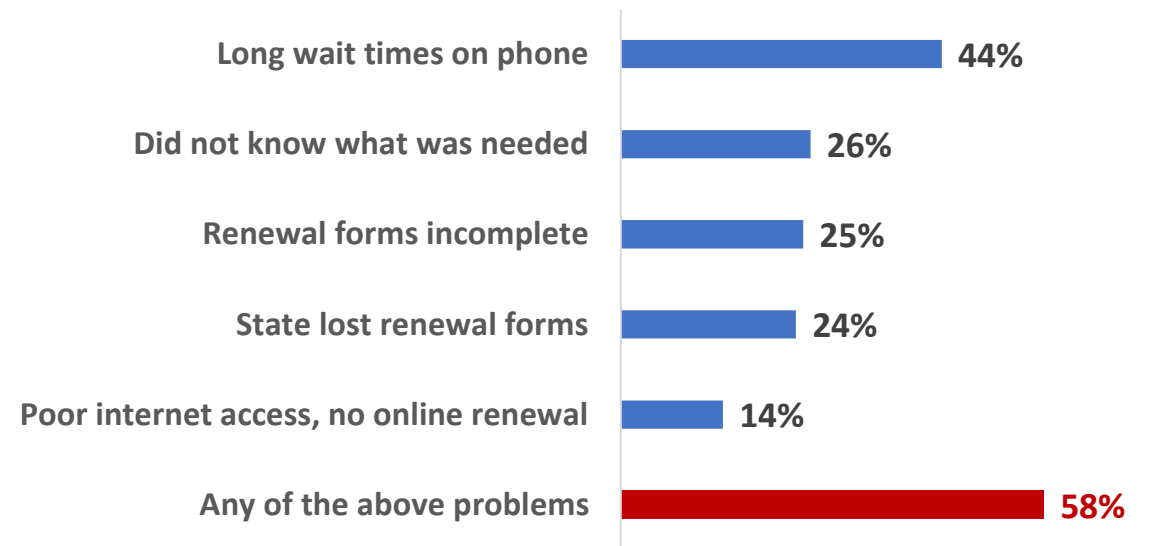
Source: Analysis of [data](#) from the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, available on 7/15/24.

Most Medicaid losses resulted from nothing more than missing paperwork

Reasons for Medicaid terminations during unwinding



Among people trying to renew Medicaid during unwinding, the percentage reporting various problems



Lessons for policymakers

What to do

- Make administrative burdens irrelevant to as many people as possible
- Incentivize states to cover eligible families

What not to do

- Impose work documentation requirements that will cause huge paperwork-driven terminations
- Give states increased authority to terminate eligible families



A possible
message for
next week

Given historic Medicaid losses that began in the middle of 2023, the net health coverage gains reported for 2023 show the importance of enhanced PTCs and related administration policy in making it affordable for people to buy their own health insurance. Unless enhanced PTCs continue beyond 2025, the health insurance progress we've seen in 2021, 2022, and 2023 is likely to disappear.

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