

## CERTIFICATE-OF-NEED LAWS



# NEBRASKA

## STATE PROFILE

Certificate-of-need (CON) laws require healthcare providers to obtain permission before they open or expand their practices or purchase certain devices or new technologies. Applicants must prove that the community “needs” the new or expanded service, and existing providers are invited to challenge would-be competitors’ applications. CON laws have persisted in spite of mounting evidence from health economists, regulatory economists, and antitrust lawyers showing that these laws fail to achieve their intended goals. The following charts are based on studies comparing outcomes in states that have CON laws with outcomes in those that do not. These comparisons account for socioeconomic differences and differences in the underlying health of the populations across states. The studies give some insight into what is likely to happen in a Nebraska without CON laws.



### HEALTHCARE SERVICES THAT REQUIRE A CON IN NEBRASKA AS OF JANUARY 2020

Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Long-Term Acute Care (LTAC)

Nursing Home Beds/  
Long-Term Care Beds

Rehabilitation

# SPENDING

Research finds that CON laws are associated with higher healthcare spending per capita and higher physician spending per capita.

## Estimated changes in annual per capita healthcare spending patterns in Nebraska without CON

TOTAL HEALTHCARE SPENDING



PHYSICIAN SPENDING

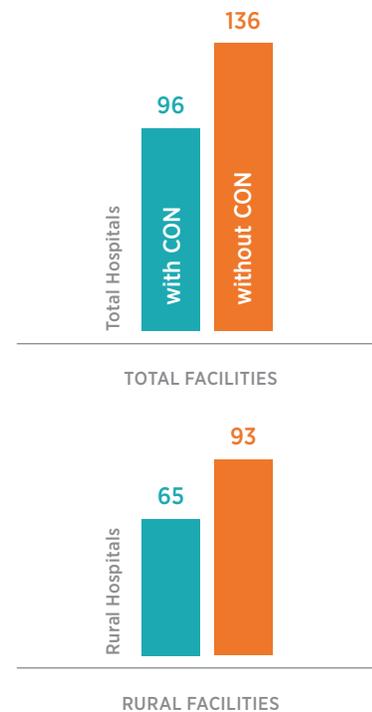


# ACCESS

Comparing rural areas in CON states with rural areas in non-CON states, research finds that the presence of a CON program is associated with fewer rural hospitals. A subset of CON states specifically regulate the entry of ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs), which provide healthcare services and compete with traditional hospitals. These states have fewer rural ASCs.

Research also finds that states with CON programs have fewer hospitals in general (in rural and nonrural areas alike), and states with ASC-specific CON regulations have fewer ASCs in general.

## Estimated changes in access to healthcare facilities in Nebraska without CON

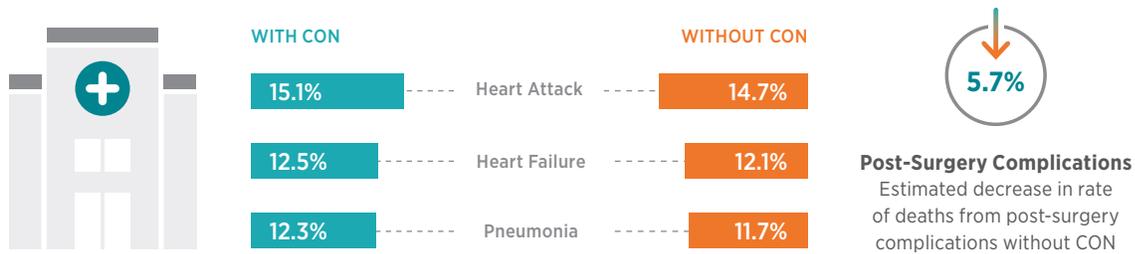


Sources: James Bailey, "Can Health Spending Be Reined In through Supply Constraints? An Evaluation of Certificate-of-Need Laws" (Mercatus Working Paper, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Arlington, VA, 2016); Thomas Stratmann and Christopher Koopman, "Entry Regulation and Rural Health Care: Certificate-of-Need Laws, Ambulatory Surgical Centers, and Community Hospitals" (Mercatus Working Paper, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Arlington, VA, 2016).

# QUALITY

Supporters of CON suggest that these regulations positively impact healthcare quality, but research finds that the quality of hospital care in CON states is not systematically higher than the quality in non-CON states. In fact, mortality rates for pneumonia, heart failure, and heart attacks, as well as patient deaths from serious complications after surgery, are statistically significantly higher in hospitals in states with at least one CON regulation.

## Estimated changes in Nebraska healthcare quality indicators



This study uses an identification strategy that exploits the fact that, on occasion, a local healthcare market is divided between two states, one with a CON law and the other without. Four is the median number of CON laws for CON states in this subsample.

Some states have added CON requirements for particular services since these analyses were conducted; the states with such new requirements are not visualized. For the latest information on which states regulate which procedures through CON, see Matthew D. Mitchell, Anne Philpot, and Jessica McBirney, "The State of Certificate-of-Need Laws in 2020," Mercatus Center at George Mason University, November 11, 2020.

Source: Thomas Stratmann and David Wille, "Certificate-of-Need Laws and Hospital Quality" (Mercatus Working Paper, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Arlington, VA, 2016).