

# Expand PACE® in 2026 to Save Lives and State Dollars



In a budget-deficit year, Nebraska can expand a proven, cost-effective care solution for older adults who qualify for nursing home-level care, and save over \$34,000 per participant annually.

## Nebraska seniors deserve dignity, safety, and wellness

PACE® coordinates all medical and long-term services, including clinic visits, in-home care, medication, transportation, and meals. It also provides necessities such as hearing aids, ramps, and air conditioning. Combined, this program helps participants and caregivers thrive.

### What is PACE®?

PACE® is a nationally recognized model for people ages 55 and older who meet nursing home-level criteria, but can live at home with comprehensive support. PACE® organizations receive capitated payments and serve as the full-risk insurer, integrating care across preventive, primary, acute, behavioral health, prescriptions, transportation, and meals, simplifying life for participants and saving the state money.

### Why it matters

- **PACE® improves outcomes and daily life.** It fills gaps in transportation and social connection for homebound seniors.
- **All-inclusive and simple.** PACE® is the full-risk insurer; most participants pay zero out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Proven savings.** Expanding PACE® saves Nebraska's Medicaid program \$34,075 per person per year, with \$7.5 million projected if 221 Medicaid-eligible individuals enroll.

Spending on PACE® in Nebraska is estimated to be about

**32%**

less than what would have been spent otherwise.

Immanuel Pathways saves the Medicaid program more than

**\$34,000**

per individual per year enrolled in PACE®

**\$34+** Million  
saved since 2020



Your home. Your care. Your pace.

## Why expand PACE® now?

Nebraska faces both a budget deficit and a growing senior population. PACE® reduces hospitalizations, readmissions, and falls by coordinating care that meets complex needs at home, while saving millions of dollars. It's a smarter, more compassionate, and fiscally responsible choice.

## Barriers & fixes

### 1 Restrictive Medicaid income limit

To qualify for Medicaid assistance for all seniors, Nebraska's income limit is \$1,305 per month, or 100% federal poverty level (FPL). This is far below surrounding states at \$2,982 per month, which is 300% Social Security Income (SSI).

- **We ask:** Require Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to amend the Medicaid State Plan and allow 300% SSI eligibility for PACE® participants.

### 2 Unsustainable payment rates

Nebraska pays PACE® 32% less than traditional Medicaid for similar care, saving \$34,075 per person per year. Serving 221 individuals saves \$7.5 million.

- **Current capitation:** \$5,604 per month vs. upper payment limit (UPL) \$8,444 (only 66.4% of UPL; national average 88%).
- **We ask:** Require DHHS to set a more sustainable UPL.

## Immanuel Pathways: Going where the need is

Immanuel Pathways of Eastern Nebraska is the state's first and only PACE® program. It was launched in 2013, and continues to go where the need is greatest.



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## Example of impact

One woman in Omaha relies solely on \$1,625 a month from Social Security retirement benefits. That amount barely stretches far enough to cover her mortgage, utilities, groceries, and the essentials, leaving little room for unexpected needs.

After a recent hospitalization, ongoing chronic conditions, and growing challenges managing her care, her doctor recommended she consider a nursing home. Hoping to find a better alternative, she and her daughters learned about the PACE® program and believe it could help her stay in the community rather than move into a facility. But her income is \$320 over Nebraska's Medicaid limit of \$1,305 per month. And because both nursing homes and the more affordable PACE® program generally require Medicaid to be financially attainable, she currently doesn't qualify for either.

If she lived just across the river in Iowa, where the Medicaid income limit is \$2,982, she would easily qualify for both PACE® and long-term care, with room to spare. In Nebraska, though, strict income guidelines force families like hers into complicated spend-down processes simply to access needed care. As a result, they're left scrambling to find support outside a nursing home, even though the State could ultimately end up paying far more each month if she were forced to enter one.

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