

Healthy kids, better learners

The basics

- One Pennsylvania child in 12 – 250,000 children – does not have health insurance.
- One Pennsylvania child in three has government-funded health coverage. CHIP enrolls more than 135,550 children (July 2004), and Medicaid enrolls 808,300 children (December 2003).
- A family of four can earn up to \$45,000 a year or more and qualify for low-cost or free health coverage.
- Parents can learn about coverage and apply through the Healthy Kids Helpline, 1-800-986-KIDS, or online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

School and activities

Healthy kids are better learners and more active. The lack of health coverage is a barrier:

- Uninsured children are more likely to miss school than children with insurance coverage.
- Uninsured children are less likely to see a doctor when they're sick and before their condition deteriorates.ⁱ
- One parent of uninsured children in five keeps a child out of athletics for fear of injury.ⁱⁱ

Medical treatment

Health coverage opens doors to regular health care:

- Uninsured children are 70 percent less likely to be treated for common childhood illnesses such as ear infections and sore throats.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Insured children have better access to preventive care, acute care for short-term illnesses and injuries, and ongoing care for chronic illnesses such as asthma or diabetes.^{iv} Uninsured children are four times more likely to have an unmet medical need.^v
- Uninsured children are nearly seven times more likely to lack a "medical home," where health records are maintained and parents have a working relationship with a primary care provider.^{vi}
- Uninsured children are more likely to use the emergency room.

Family

Parents need more information on available programs, and they need it continuously:

- Jobs do not automatically translate into health insurance coverage. Eight uninsured children in 10 come from families in which at least one parent works.^{vii}
- Half of all parents who qualify for CHIP or Medicaid believe they're not eligible.^{viii} In Pennsylvania, many parents are aware of available insurance programs but believe they make too much money to qualify.^{ix}

ⁱ Journal of the American Medical Association. ⁱⁱ Wirthlin Worldwide, Survey of American Parents, June 2001, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Report. ⁱⁱⁱ *In Their Own Words*, The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, September 2000. ^{iv} Wirthlin Worldwide, Survey of American Parents, June 2001, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Report. ^v Wirthlin Worldwide, Survey of American Parents, June 2001, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Report. ^{vi} *Unmet Needs: The Large Differences in Health Care Between Uninsured and Insured Children*, Report for Families USA. ^{vii} Wirthlin Worldwide, Survey of American Parents, June 2001, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Report. ^{viii} Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Covering Kids survey, 2000. ^{ix} Kids NOW! Tools and Tips, http://www.haponline.org/ihc/kidsnow/resource_center/tool.asp.