



PROVIDING HEALTH INSURANCE TO EVERY CHILD IN CALIFORNIA

A 100% Campaign Fact Sheet

California has a historic opportunity to lead the nation in ensuring that every child has affordable health coverage. Just as California ensures education for every child in the state, we can provide the opportunity for health coverage for all children. **The 100% Campaign**—a joint effort of Children Now, Children's Defense Fund, and The Children's Partnership—is working to secure health insurance for every California child. We are closer than ever to achieving this important goal and must finish the job.

Providing Children with Health Insurance is the Right Thing to Do

Health insurance is a critical investment in children's health.

Children need regular medical and dental check ups to ensure healthy development and to catch conditions like hearing loss before preventable harm occurs. Providing health coverage has a positive impact on children's health. ¹ Children covered by Healthy Families are healthier and are better able to pay attention in school, particularly those children gaining coverage who have the poorest health. ²

Children with health insurance are more likely to get the care they need, including essential preventive care.

Children without health insurance are three times more likely to lack a regular source of care than children with public insurance coverage. ³ Uninsured children are also more likely to miss out on necessary care and more likely to have to rely on expensive emergency rooms for routine care. ⁴

Children with health insurance perform better in school. Children in poor health miss school more often and perform less well academically. Learning is difficult with an earache, a sore tooth, or poorly-managed asthma. ⁵ An evaluation of the Healthy Families program found that children insured through the program show a 68% improvement in “paying attention” and “keeping up with school activities.”²

Health insurance is a matter of life and death.

Twenty five years of health care research shows that having insurance reduces the incidence of death by 10 to 15%.⁴

Children's health insurance protects families.

Children's health insurance also protects parents against catastrophic health care costs when their children have accidents or serious health conditions like diabetes.

California's Record of Providing Children's Health Insurance

Today, 89% of California's 10 million children have health insurance, primarily through their parents' employers or the state's public insurance programs, Healthy Families and Medi-Cal.⁶ Recent investments in state-subsidized health insurance has increased rates of insurance coverage for children significantly, with nearly one-third of California's children now insured through Healthy Families and Medi-Cal.

Most children in California (51%) receive health coverage through their parents' employers.

However, rising premiums have resulted in a 4% drop in employer-sponsored health coverage for children from 2001.⁷

California provides free or low-cost health insurance to many low-income children through two programs: Medi-Cal and Healthy Families. Children with annual family incomes just under \$40,000 (family of 3) can generally qualify for public health insurance. Medi-Cal covers 3.3 million of our state's poorest children and Healthy Families covers about 700,000 low to middle income children. Healthy Families and Medi-Cal contract with private and local health plans to deliver care.

By enrolling children in public insurance, California gains billions of federal dollars for its health care system. For every dollar the state invests in insuring children, the state receives either \$1 to \$2 from the federal government.

Almost 800,000 children lack health insurance in California.⁹ The good news is that 55% of these uninsured children qualify for Healthy Families and Medi-Cal insurance. Improving the enrollment process for these programs could go a long way to connecting these eligible children with health insurance.

California communities and counties are leading the way to fill in the gaps. Currently about 27 counties have or are planning Children's Health Initiatives (CHI's) to expand health insurance to all children. Coalitions of local leaders and county agencies are connecting children with available health insurance and providing new insurance coverage—through Healthy Kids programs—for children who do not currently qualify for state insurance.

Roughly 75% of uninsured children live in counties with local CHIs. Ten local CHIs already provide health insurance, while another 17 local CHIs are in the planning or development stage. To date, these local programs have cumulatively enrolled more than 50,000 children.¹⁰

Initiatives that offer coverage to all children are proven successes. Santa Clara County, which launched the first CHI in 2001, has had impressive results—not only did its Healthy Kids program cover kids who did not previously qualify for coverage, but their initiative dramatically increased Medi-Cal and Healthy Families enrollment by 28%.¹¹ Santa Clara's success makes one point clear: parents are more likely to use a program that offers insurance to all children in their family.

Roughly 75% of California's uninsured children have working parents, making partnerships with businesses a logical part of any solution to cover California's children.¹²

For more information on the 100% Campaign, please visit www.100percentcampaign.org

¹ Lave JR et al. "Impact of a Children's Health Insurance Program on Newly Enrolled children". *JAMA* 1998 Vol. 279, Issue 22, pp. 1820-1825.

² Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board. Health Status Assessment Final Report, April 2004.

³ Haley J, Zuckerman S. "Health Insurance, Access and Use: United States." 1997 National Survey of American's Families. Washington DC: Urban Institute, 2000.

⁴ Dubay L, Kenney GM. "Health Care Access and Use Among Low-Income Children: Who Fares Best?" *Health Affairs*, 2001 Volume 20, Issue 1, pp. 112-121.

⁵ "Sicker & Poorer: The Consequences of Being Uninsured." Kaiser commission on Medicaid & the Uninsured, 2002.

⁶ California Health Interview Survey 2003, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research

⁷ UCLA Center for Health Policy Research analysis of CHIS 2001 and 2003 data.

⁹ CHIS 2003. This reflects the number of children uninsured at the time of the survey—the data point that the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research uses to calculate the breakout of uninsured children and their eligibility for state insurance programs.

¹⁰ Institute for Health Policy Solutions, California. www.ihps-ca.org.

¹¹ Trenholm, C. *Expanding Coverage for Children: Santa Clara County's Children's Health Initiative*. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. June 2004, Issue Brief No. 4.

¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey.