

Spring 2005

PROGRESS REPORT

Number of Uninsured Children Exceeds Estimate

There are more uninsured children in the United States than is commonly acknowledged because many children who experience gaps in insurance coverage are not counted in the total number, according to a new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP researchers also found that many children with gaps in coverage go without needed medical care and prescriptions.

The researchers analyzed data from the 2000 and 2001 National Health Interview Surveys. They found that on average for those two years, 6.6 percent of U.S. children 17 years of age and under had no health insurance coverage during the entire preceding 12-month period. However, the number more than doubled, to an average of 14.3 percent when children with no insurance for part of the year were included.

“If you only count the number of children without insurance today, you will miss the children who at another time of year don’t have insurance,” said lead author Lynn Olson, PhD. “Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the importance of continuous, stable health insurance coverage.”

Olson explained that finding out the number of uninsured children is not just a matter of asking the single question: how many children are uninsured? It involves a series of questions including; how many are uninsured today? How many are without insurance for an entire year?

In a year’s time, how many children experience some period without insurance?

The researchers also found that children who are only insured part of the year go without needed medical care and have unfilled prescriptions at the same high rate as children who are uninsured for the whole year. Nearly 1 in 8 experienced unmet medical care and 1 in 10 went without prescriptions filled. In addition, being uninsured substantially increased the likelihood of having access to care problems regardless of age, income, race/ethnicity, region, citizenship, family structure, parental employment and health status.

Family Cost-Sharing Increases Proposed for HK Silver

The Department of Health and Human Services has proposed an increase of \$5 in premium levels for the Healthy Kids Silver program. In addition, co-payments for ER visits would increase from \$50 to \$75, and co-pays for vision and hearing exams and eyeglasses would rise from \$5 to \$10. The Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules will take up the proposal at its September meeting. (<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules>)

A public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, August 16, 2005, at 1 p.m. at DHHS, 129 Pleasant St., Concord, in the Brown Building Auditorium. For more information, contact Suzanne Barricklow, DHHS/Office of Program Support, 271-7342, slbarricklow@dhhs.state.nh.us.

NHHK CEO Honored by New Hampshire Public Health Association

The New Hampshire Public Health Association recently honored NHHK CEO Tricia Brooks for her contribution to public health in New Hampshire. The award was presented at the NHPHA annual meeting in April. Brooks thanked the Association for the award and said that it really honored the entire New Hampshire Healthy Kids staff and its dedication to providing access to needed health care for families across the state.



Healthy Kids Program Involved in National Focus Group Study on Premiums

Healthy Kids participated in a focus group project to gather additional information about the effects of premiums on the SCHIP program. The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) convened eight focus groups in four states – New Jersey, Nevada, Alabama and New Hampshire. The four states have varying income eligibility levels and cost sharing (premium) amounts.

Two focus groups in each state were recruited – one with enrollees and one with disenrollees. Healthy Kids staff recruited the participants for the focus groups in New Hampshire and worked with NASHP to develop questions for the two groups. In addition, staff was able to observe the focus group sessions.

The focus groups were asked a series of questions including rating the Healthy Kids program overall, the amount of the family's monthly premium, and for disenrollees to what extent paying premiums had on their decision to leave the Healthy Kids program.

According to NASHP, the number of states that have increased, or are planning to increase, cost sharing in their SCHIP programs is significant. These same states indicated to NASHP a desire for more information on cost-sharing and cost-sharing policies on enrollment and retention. Results of a 2001 focus group study found that 17% of parents with children enrolled in SCHIP reported trouble every month or every couple of months paying their premiums.

Findings from the project will be made available to NH Healthy Kids and posted on the NHHK website.



NHHK Receives Grant from The Corporate Fund for Web Site

New Hampshire Healthy Kids received a \$6,100 grant from The Corporate Fund to redesign the NHHK web site. The redesign calls for both design and technical upgrades.

“We really want the web site to be both informative and interactive,” said Tricia Brooks, President and CEO of New Hampshire Healthy

Kids. “The site will be a resource for families, human service agencies, providers, and the public. We’d like to thank The Corporate Fund for this generous grant.”

Design changes will take place over the summer, with a relaunch slated for fall.

Healthy Kids Staff News

New Personnel

Amy Flynn has joined the NHHK Staff as a Field Coordinator. Flynn is a graduate of Keene State College and resides in Belmont. She previously worked for Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Cigna. Flynn will be doing outreach and education in the western half of the state.

Holly Gardner has joined the Applications Team at NHHK as a Customer Service Representative. Gardner is currently attending Rivier College and pursuing a degree in Psychology. She previously worked as a Licensed Nurses Assistant at the Elliot Hospital and resides in Manchester.

Dressing Down For a Good Cause

The staff of Kingswood Regional Middle School in Wolfeboro decided to take casual Fridays to the next level. Each Friday, teachers, administrators and school staff “dress down” from their usual attire in exchange for a small donation to a nonprofit organization. New Hampshire Healthy Kids was selected as one of the participating organizations and received a donation of \$65 from the school.

“We’d like to thank the staff of Kingswood Regional Middle School for this creative fundraiser,” said Colleen Cowette, Director of Communications and Development for NHHK. “This project not only raised money for New Hampshire Healthy Kids, but also raised awareness about a vital program for the families of this state.”



Mark Your Calendar!
New Hampshire Healthy Kids Annual Meeting
Grappone Conference Center
Concord, NH
October 24, 2005
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

NHHK Welcomes New Provider Partners

NHHK healthcare provider partnerships reduce the cost of Healthy Kids Silver insurance by an estimated \$22 per month off standard group insurance rates. By sharing the cost of providing healthcare to Healthy Kids members, we are able to stretch limited State and Federal dollars to cover more kids. Our sincere appreciation goes out to these new provider financial partners:

Dr. Ernest P. D'Angelo, MD
Derry Medical Center
Dr. Lisa M. Fitzgibbons, MD
Dr. David M. Freedman, MD
Dr. Paul J. Harper, MD
Frisbie Health Services
Dr. Paul F. Gustavson, MD

Hanger Prosthetics & Orthotics East
Health Partners of NH, Inc.
Infusion Solutions, Inc.
Moultonboro VNS
New London Hospital Practices
Weeks Medical Center Physician Practices

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