



PRESS RELEASE

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1 IN 10 UTAH CHILDREN ARE UNINSURED

Many of Utah's Uninsured Kids Eligible for CHIP or Medicaid

Utah's First Lady and the Utah Covering Kids & Families Coalition Encourage Parents to Find Out If Their Kids Qualify for Low-Cost or Free Health Care Coverage

Salt Lake City, UT – A research study shows 1 in 10 Utah children are uninsured. The research also showed that, nationally, more than seven in ten uninsured children are eligible for but not enrolled in low-cost or free health care coverage through Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). There are nearly 70,000 uninsured children in Utah and many are eligible for coverage through Utah's CHIP or Medicaid, the state's low-cost or free health care coverage plans for children.

"It is disturbing to realize many children in Utah are not receiving the health care they need. Some are missing out on annual checkups that will prevent them from developing more serious medical conditions," said Mary Kaye Huntsman, Utah's First Lady. "We hope to inform parents that coverage is available for their uninsured children."

Karen Crompton, executive director of Voices for Utah Children and Steve Pastorino, General Manager for Real Salt Lake, kicked off a press event at Rice-Eccles Stadium to encourage parents to enroll their eligible uninsured children in Utah's CHIP or Medicaid program. The event coincided with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation national kickoff in Washington, D.C. of its sixth annual *Covering Kids & Families* Back-to-School Campaign earlier today.

"All of Utah's children deserve affordable health care coverage. Yet every day Utah families with uninsured children are unnecessarily forced to make hard choices in caring for their kids," said State Representative David Hogue. "These sacrifices have far-reaching consequences for Utah children who lack health insurance. Fortunately, many children in Utah are eligible for coverage through CHIP or Medicaid. With this campaign, we hope to inform more parents that these programs can help them improve their children's health and quality of life."

“Going Without: America’s Uninsured Children” was released this week by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as part of the *Covering Kids & Families* Back-to-School Campaign, a nationwide effort to enroll eligible children in public health care coverage programs during the back-to-school season. The research was prepared by analysts at the State Health Access Data Assistance Center, located at the University of Minnesota, and the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. Additional findings include:

- The number of uninsured children is decreasing nationally. While the number of uninsured parents has increased by more than 1 million, the number of uninsured children in America has decreased by nearly 2 million, largely due to enrollment in public programs.
- Uninsured kids in Utah do not have a regular doctor or nurse. 89.1% of insured children in Utah have someone they consider their personal doctor or nurse, compared with 60.3% of uninsured children.
- Uninsured Hispanic children are less likely to receive medical care than uninsured white children. Nationally, more than 40 percent (41.4%) of uninsured Hispanic children went without any medical care during the year, compared to just a quarter (25.7%) of uninsured white children.

The report analyzes data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics, including the 2003 National Survey of Children’s Health and the 2003 National Health Interview Survey.

Several Utah families enrolled in CHIP and Medicaid, attended the kickoff event today, hosted by *Utah Covering Kids & Families* and Real Salt Lake, to share their stories and help spread the word to other families that their uninsured kids may be eligible for coverage. Families also delivered birthday wishes to Medicaid, which turned 40 on July 30. Rebecca Rowley, married and the mother of four children said, “My wish is that Medicaid stays affordable for people without the money to pay for health care on their own.” Both Rebecca and her husband work. She has health insurance through her part time employment but they can’t afford coverage for her husband or the children. Her husband is trying to get insurance through his employer but must wait for a year of full employment and the next open enrollment cycle. Two of their children receive health care coverage through CHIP and two through Medicaid.

Parents of uninsured children can call toll-free 1(877) KIDS-NOW to find out if their children are eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage. A family of four earning up to \$38,000 a year or more may qualify.

To view the research report (including state-level data), locate *Covering Kids & Families* activities or download materials in English or Spanish, log on to www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org.

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Utah *Covering Kids & Families* is part of a national initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to reduce the number of uninsured children and adults. Since 2000, *Covering Kids & Families* has helped nearly 5 million uninsured children in the United States enroll in health care coverage through Medicaid and CHIP. Voices for Utah Children is the state grantee for the *Covering Kids & Families* initiative.