



Health Care and a Medical Home for Florida's Young Children

Executive Summary

In the last few years, the rate of uninsured children declined by 18 percent to a rate of 6 percent across our nation. However, Florida continues to lag behind and remains in the bottom five states for the percentage of uninsured children. Florida's improvement of 15.6 percent was below the improvement curve for the country, and nearly one of every ten Florida children remains without health insurance coverage, and without consistent access to quality health services, ie a medical home.

Health care coverage is not only important to children's health and well-being, it is critical to helping kids succeed in school and developing into healthy productive adults. With an estimated 378,000 of Florida's children still going without health insurance, there is considerable room for improvement.

This year, Florida has a unique opportunity to reduce this rate of uninsured children by removing the 5 year ban on lawfully residing immigrant children so they can receive health insurance through the KidCare program and establish a medical home with a pediatrician, thus receiving preventive primary care and improving their opportunities for success in school and in life. Removing the 5 year ban will save the state between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in general revenue per year due to savings to the Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) Fund.

The Problem

Approximately 378,000 children remain uninsured in Florida, and nearly a quarter of those (24%) are under age 6, the critical age when screening and preventive primary care has tremendous positive long term implications for children to enable them to achieve their full potential in life. Simply put, when children have access to health care services they have better health outcomes, higher educational achievement, and become healthier and more productive adults.

A new Georgetown University report found that although the approximately 378,000 Florida children did who not have health coverage in 2014, was down from more than 445,000 the prior year, Florida continues to rank among the worst states in the nation for the rate of

children without health insurance, improving from 47th in 2013 to 46th in 2014. Currently, 9.3 percent of Florida's kids remain uninsured.

General findings from the report:

- As of 2014, Florida ranks 46 out of 51 (including District of Columbia) for the overall percentage of uninsured kids.
- 67,048 previously uninsured children enrolled in health coverage between 2013 and 2014, the third highest increase in the nation behind California and Texas.
- Hispanic children accounted for more than one-third (24,086) of the previously uninsured children who enrolled in a health plan between 2013 and 2014.
- The number of uninsured children in Florida declined by 43 percent between 2008 (667,758) and 2014 (377,987).

Background/History

Prior to the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) legislation, certain lawfully residing immigrant children had a five year waiting period before they could receive Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage. As of April 1, 2009, CHIPRA legislation gave states the option of eliminating the five year waiting period. Since that time, 29 states (including the District of Columbia) have adopted this option, including: Texas, Virginia, Ohio, Nebraska, Kentucky, Montana, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Wisconsin, New York, Illinois, and California. However, Florida continues to apply the five year waiting period.

Currently, all immigrant children with any alien status, including immigrant children in the five year waiting period, who meet Medicaid eligibility requirements except for citizenship or alien status, and needing emergency medical care, can apply for Emergency Medical Assistance for Aliens (EMA). Children eligible under this aid category receive Medicaid coverage for the duration of the emergency only. This is a very expensive option, and many of these children receive no ongoing preventive treatment or follow up care to prevent a relapse or reoccurrence.

Opportunities for Improving Access

The Affordable Care Act:

The Affordable Care Act doesn't directly affect access to coverage for most children. It focuses on coverage for adults who experience higher rates of uninsurance. However, research has demonstrated that parents with insurance are more likely to have children who are also insured. Many of the children who gained insurance are participating in family coverage from their parents who gained insurance. Florida saw a 17.6 percent decrease in the rate of non-elderly uninsured adults between 2013 and 2014 when the provisions of the ACA and the

insurance marketplaces began operating indicating a great focus on the benefits of coverage. In Florida there are approximately 89,000 children included in 2015 Marketplace plans.

A new report by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families and KidsWell Florida found the number of uninsured children declined by 1.7 percent in Florida between 2013 to 2014 — a period of time when more Floridians became eligible for new affordable coverage options through the Affordable Care Act.

The improvement can be attributed to successful outreach and enrollment efforts related to the Affordable Care Act. However, the family glitch which requires employers to only offer coverage to their employees, instead of whole family coverage means that many children do not benefit from this option and that KidCare remains a viable option for covering low income children.

KidCare:

HB 89/SB 248 proposes to eliminate the five year waiting period and allow these children to receive Medicaid and CHIP coverage. AHCA's latest bill analysis projected that approximately 17,000 additional children will be eligible for coverage if the five year waiting period is eliminated.

Section 214 of the federal CHIPRA legislation allows states to claim the CHIP enhanced federal match rate for both CHIP and Medicaid children during their five year waiting period. The October Agency bill analysis estimated that eliminating the five year waiting period will cost a total of \$32,350,066. Using the CHIP enhanced federal match rate (95.83%) for both the CHIP and Medicaid projected enrollment increase, funding would be a combination of **\$1,336,537 in general revenue**, \$30,714,717 in federal funding and \$298,811 in family premiums.

New Analysis: Offsetting Expenditures

Later, on November 17, AHCA stated that during the state fiscal year 2014/2015, a total of 3,192 children received Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) coverage, totaling \$7,970,967 in expenditures. If HB 89/SB 248 was enacted into law, approximately 17,000 children in their five year waiting period would be potentially eligible for Medicaid and CHIP coverage. This means that Medicaid may already be paying for emergency services for this population.

Even though it is unknown exactly how many of these children would actually apply, if it is assumed that 25% of these expenditures are for children who are in their 5-year waiting period and will qualify for CHIP/Medicaid coverage, the net result is as follows:

General Revenue Expenditures (25%)				
	Number of Children	CHIP	Medicaid	Total
Children who received Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) for Aliens and potentially eligible under HB 89/SB 248	798	N/A	\$783,745	\$783,745
Children potentially eligible under HB 89/SB 248	8,587	\$91,197	\$577,073	\$668,269
				-\$115,476

*The Agency can only estimate the number of children who have received EMA for aliens vs. those would qualify for Medicaid/CHIP if HB 89/SB 248 passed.

However, using these illustrations, AHCA's supposition is that the general revenue spent on EMA coverage for this population would offset the general revenue funding needed to support this legislation such that the amount of state General Revenue needed is \$0.

Legislators Supporting the Legislation

Senators Rene Garcia and Don Gaetz, and Representative Jose Felix Diaz are sponsoring the legislation to remove the 5 year KidCare ban.

Groups Supporting the Change





PICO United Florida
Unlocking the Power of People™



florida
CHAIN



FLORIDA IMPACT



FLORIDA CENTER FOR FISCAL
AND ECONOMIC POLICY



Florida Coalition
for Children