

Twelve Ways to Improve Learning

Ensure Access to Health Care

Definition and Source

Illinois has two joint state/federal programs that provide low-income children with health insurance coverage: KidCare and Medicaid. This indicator shows the numbers of children who are enrolled in KidCare or Medicaid annually since 1998. Since 2004, federal law requires that data not be released for the following counties because of privacy concerns: Brown, Calhoun, Hardin, Pope, Putnam, Scott and Stark. Data are from the Illinois Department of Public Aid and are from November 1998 and 1999, October 2000, 2001 and 2002, and December 2003 and 2004.

Trends and Key Findings

More than 1.1 million Illinois children are receiving health insurance from KidCare and Medicaid. Medicaid enrollment has remained steady at around three-quarters of a million children, while KidCare enrollment has boomed. Counties that have doubled their KidCare and Medicaid enrollment from 1998 to 2004 include Boone, Cass, DeKalb, Douglas, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, McHenry, Moultrie, Ogle, Schuyler, Whiteside and Woodford. No counties experienced a decline in enrollment. However, an estimated 11 percent of Illinois children are still without health insurance.

In August 2003, Illinois' Medicaid system was found in violation of federal law for not offering children covered by Medicaid access to medical care that is equal to the care received by children covered by other public or private insurance plans. Plaintiffs argued that Medicaid's reimbursement rates paid to medical providers are 35 percent to 40 percent below what private insurance pays and 50 percent below what Medicare pays; as a result, these low reimbursement rates discourage many providers from accepting Medicaid patients. The court also ruled that children covered by Medicaid are not receiving the preventive care they are entitled to, such as well-child visits, immunizations, and vision, mental and dental screenings. State officials are working with plaintiffs in the lawsuit to address the findings.

KIDCARE AND MEDICAID ENROLLMENT

| | Children enrolled | | | | | | | % change, 1998-2004 |
|------------|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | |
| Illinois | 781,303 | 820,407 | 883,573 | 932,690 | 960,449 | 1,034,928 | 1,109,254 | 42.0 |
| Adams | 4,008 | 4,288 | 4,600 | 4,699 | 4,886 | 5,029 | 5,282 | 31.8 |
| Alexander | 1,558 | 1,461 | 1,528 | 1,614 | 1,644 | 1,650 | 1,646 | 5.6 |
| Bond | 722 | 848 | 874 | 954 | 1,034 | 1,144 | 1,265 | 75.2 |
| Boone | 1,383 | 1,423 | 1,605 | 2,023 | 2,342 | 2,818 | 3,104 | 124.4 |
| Brown | 227 | 228 | 229 | 209 | 244 | 257 | NA | NA |
| Bureau | 1,276 | 1,395 | 1,566 | 1,735 | 2,029 | 2,285 | 2,496 | 95.6 |
| Calhoun | 137 | 154 | 161 | 207 | 224 | 278 | NA | NA |
| Carroll | 720 | 816 | 922 | 983 | 1,038 | 1,173 | 1,232 | 71.1 |
| Cass | 574 | 663 | 829 | 940 | 1,030 | 1,103 | 1,183 | 106.1 |
| Champaign | 7,697 | 8,391 | 8,903 | 9,561 | 10,458 | 11,746 | 12,594 | 63.6 |
| Christian | 2,083 | 2,206 | 2,271 | 2,463 | 2,667 | 2,936 | 3,125 | 50.0 |
| Clark | 839 | 938 | 1,093 | 1,095 | 1,283 | 1,451 | 1,516 | 80.7 |
| Clay | 794 | 819 | 961 | 1,030 | 1,180 | 1,278 | 1,379 | 73.7 |
| Clinton | 1,222 | 1,231 | 1,249 | 1,293 | 1,330 | 1,494 | 1,718 | 40.6 |
| Coles | 2,019 | 2,329 | 2,501 | 3,026 | 3,132 | 3,327 | 3,555 | 76.1 |
| Cook | 481,900 | 496,326 | 534,164 | 549,336 | 541,505 | 576,470 | 612,696 | 27.1 |
| Crawford | 1,056 | 1,204 | 1,250 | 1,389 | 1,471 | 1,577 | 1,566 | 48.3 |
| Cumberland | 636 | 706 | 744 | 794 | 864 | 870 | 851 | 33.8 |
| De Kalb | 2,215 | 2,500 | 2,823 | 3,256 | 3,622 | 4,041 | 4,491 | 102.8 |
| De Witt | 862 | 876 | 975 | 1,083 | 1,227 | 1,247 | 1,354 | 57.1 |
| Douglas | 660 | 672 | 750 | 890 | 1,094 | 1,211 | 1,326 | 100.9 |
| Du Page | 11,580 | 13,533 | 16,303 | 19,499 | 22,683 | 29,192 | 32,042 | 176.7 |
| Edgar | 1,088 | 1,152 | 1,230 | 1,411 | 1,561 | 1,603 | 1,685 | 54.9 |
| Edwards | 343 | 372 | 410 | 459 | 485 | 404 | 501 | 46.1 |
| Effingham | 1,560 | 1,750 | 1,886 | 2,227 | 2,252 | 2,409 | 2,668 | 71.0 |
| Fayette | 1,334 | 1,393 | 1,559 | 1,666 | 1,867 | 2,008 | 2,200 | 64.9 |
| Ford | 463 | 556 | 628 | 624 | 741 | 789 | 885 | 91.1 |
| Franklin | 2,818 | 3,201 | 3,338 | 3,480 | 4,036 | 4,062 | 4,417 | 56.7 |
| Fulton | 2,292 | 2,554 | 2,550 | 2,580 | 2,856 | 3,127 | 3,296 | 43.8 |
| Gallatin | 506 | 522 | 577 | 588 | 590 | 593 | 625 | 23.5 |
| Greene | 917 | 991 | 994 | 1,035 | 1,140 | 1,279 | 1,393 | 51.9 |
| Grundy | 755 | 810 | 1,005 | 1,170 | 1,323 | 1,572 | 1,832 | 142.6 |
| Hamilton | 539 | 593 | 659 | 654 | 698 | 736 | 765 | 41.9 |
| Hancock | 934 | 978 | 1,081 | 1,038 | 1,197 | 1,320 | 1,412 | 51.2 |
| Hardin | 299 | 266 | 313 | 378 | 431 | 402 | NA | NA |
| Henderson | 407 | 463 | 479 | 502 | 548 | 587 | 592 | 45.5 |
| Henry | 1,982 | 2,280 | 2,627 | 2,670 | 2,827 | 3,101 | 3,218 | 62.4 |
| Iroquois | 1,402 | 1,573 | 1,596 | 1,708 | 2,030 | 2,183 | 2,388 | 70.3 |
| Jackson | 4,137 | 4,418 | 4,435 | 4,337 | 4,739 | 4,941 | 5,104 | 23.4 |
| Jasper | 587 | 614 | 691 | 706 | 731 | 795 | 826 | 40.7 |
| Jefferson | 3,131 | 3,430 | 3,550 | 3,649 | 3,922 | 4,080 | 4,048 | 29.3 |
| Jersey | 913 | 887 | 964 | 1,067 | 1,222 | 1,196 | 1,303 | 42.7 |
| Jo Daviess | 596 | 715 | 830 | 957 | 934 | 1,014 | 1,077 | 80.7 |
| Johnson | 593 | 654 | 738 | 682 | 785 | 881 | 969 | 63.4 |
| Kane | 17,416 | 18,750 | 20,772 | 24,058 | 28,719 | 33,949 | 39,118 | 124.6 |
| Kankakee | 7,518 | 7,909 | 8,580 | 9,172 | 8,793 | 9,928 | 9,464 | 25.9 |
| Kendall | 677 | 812 | 1,021 | 1,102 | 1,470 | 1,828 | 2,140 | 216.1 |
| Knox | 2,961 | 3,513 | 3,560 | 21,531 | 4,208 | 4,756 | 5,056 | 70.8 |
| Lake | 17,888 | 4,771 | 2,571 | 5,224 | 27,235 | 30,823 | 33,277 | 86.0 |
| LaSalle | 4,159 | 19,725 | 24,383 | 8,871 | 6,316 | 7,181 | 7,659 | 84.2 |
| Lawrence | 981 | 1,073 | 1,081 | 1,071 | 1,117 | 1,160 | 1,247 | 27.1 |

KIDCARE AND MEDICAID ENROLLMENT

| | Children enrolled | | | | | | | % change, 1998-2004 |
|-------------|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------------------|
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | |
| Lee | 1,196 | 1,251 | 1,330 | 1,423 | 1,570 | 1,882 | 2,059 | 72.2 |
| Livingston | 1,543 | 1,671 | 1,772 | 1,958 | 2,296 | 2,442 | 2,543 | 64.8 |
| Logan | 1,516 | 1,562 | 1,555 | 1,650 | 1,885 | 2,131 | 2,209 | 45.7 |
| Macon | 8,638 | 8,850 | 9,172 | 9,558 | 10,374 | 10,834 | 11,375 | 31.7 |
| Macoupin | 2,462 | 2,654 | 2,636 | 2,791 | 3,150 | 3,473 | 3,816 | 55.0 |
| Madison | 15,265 | 15,784 | 16,391 | 16,890 | 16,886 | 17,963 | 19,250 | 26.1 |
| Marion | 3,227 | 3,503 | 3,827 | 4,018 | 4,264 | 4,439 | 4,562 | 41.4 |
| Marshall | 585 | 613 | 619 | 663 | 774 | 839 | 896 | 53.2 |
| Mason | 1,047 | 1,100 | 1,167 | 1,197 | 1,366 | 1,530 | 1,654 | 58.0 |
| Massac | 1,130 | 1,247 | 1,248 | 1,294 | 1,380 | 1,477 | 1,662 | 47.1 |
| McDonough | 1,328 | 1,461 | 1,589 | 1,743 | 1,901 | 1,912 | 2,030 | 52.9 |
| McHenry | 3,356 | 3,636 | 4,264 | 5,107 | 3,641 | 8,140 | 8,493 | 153.1 |
| McLean | 4,791 | 5,567 | 5,908 | 5,870 | 6,861 | 7,608 | 8,571 | 78.9 |
| Menard | 570 | 650 | 689 | 710 | 723 | 751 | 815 | 43.0 |
| Mercer | 801 | 900 | 971 | 1,018 | 1,048 | 1,076 | 1,180 | 47.3 |
| Monroe | 360 | 356 | 388 | 399 | 455 | 419 | 508 | 41.1 |
| Montgomery | 1,789 | 2,041 | 2,222 | 2,171 | 2,363 | 2,496 | 2,614 | 46.1 |
| Morgan | 1,692 | 1,882 | 1,947 | 2,156 | 2,420 | 2,652 | 2,928 | 73.0 |
| Moultrie | 367 | 455 | 530 | 583 | 731 | 793 | 899 | 145.0 |
| Ogle | 1,506 | 1,628 | 1,891 | 2,095 | 2,473 | 2,888 | 3,282 | 117.9 |
| Peoria | 14,322 | 14,952 | 14,929 | 14,716 | 16,212 | 17,947 | 19,054 | 33.0 |
| Perry | 1,222 | 1,336 | 1,331 | 1,405 | 1,632 | 1,776 | 1,852 | 51.6 |
| Piatt | 542 | 526 | 532 | 607 | 677 | 731 | 773 | 42.6 |
| Pike | 961 | 1,027 | 1,183 | 1,271 | 1,279 | 1,441 | 1,446 | 50.5 |
| Pope | 237 | 235 | 254 | 273 | 343 | 378 | NA | NA |
| Pulaski | 1,005 | 969 | 1,038 | 981 | 1,052 | 1,103 | 1,043 | 3.8 |
| Putnam | 190 | 238 | 242 | 272 | 282 | 284 | NA | NA |
| Randolph | 1,564 | 1,672 | 1,715 | 1,891 | 2,172 | 2,513 | 2,592 | 65.7 |
| Richland | 1,149 | 1,204 | 1,256 | 1,282 | 1,406 | 1,414 | 1,479 | 28.7 |
| Rock Island | 8,319 | 9,014 | 9,565 | 9,903 | 11,184 | 12,777 | 13,047 | 56.8 |
| St. Clair | 25,221 | 25,728 | 26,788 | 26,785 | 26,733 | 27,102 | 28,310 | 12.2 |
| Saline | 2,008 | 2,191 | 2,343 | 2,356 | 2,541 | 2,766 | 2,863 | 42.6 |
| Sangamon | 9,931 | 11,105 | 12,180 | 12,787 | 13,783 | 14,893 | 16,144 | 62.6 |
| Schuyler | 264 | 344 | 325 | 350 | 395 | 507 | 575 | 117.8 |
| Scott | 268 | 317 | 319 | 348 | 414 | 352 | NA | NA |
| Shelby | 913 | 972 | 1,131 | 1,244 | 1,433 | 1,480 | 1,654 | 81.2 |
| Stark | 266 | 267 | 321 | 372 | 469 | 467 | NA | NA |
| Stephenson | 2,370 | 2,560 | 2,816 | 3,045 | 3,299 | 3,735 | 3,895 | 64.3 |
| Tazewell | 4,627 | 5,088 | 5,594 | 6,029 | 6,806 | 7,524 | 8,574 | 85.3 |
| Union | 1,390 | 1,498 | 1,584 | 1,549 | 1,685 | 1,786 | 1,829 | 31.6 |
| Vermilion | 6,200 | 6,841 | 7,245 | 7,811 | 8,684 | 9,078 | 9,770 | 57.6 |
| Wabash | 792 | 873 | 898 | 872 | 969 | 1,016 | 1,020 | 28.8 |
| Warren | 980 | 1,017 | 1,151 | 1,141 | 1,279 | 1,413 | 1,479 | 50.9 |
| Washington | 431 | 509 | 510 | 585 | 676 | 608 | 756 | 75.4 |
| Wayne | 962 | 1,011 | 1,156 | 1,218 | 1,312 | 1,450 | 1,527 | 58.7 |
| White | 868 | 937 | 979 | 1,048 | 1,136 | 1,189 | 1,291 | 48.7 |
| Whiteside | 2,325 | 2,607 | 3,044 | 3,564 | 3,760 | 4,452 | 4,687 | 101.6 |
| Will | 15,086 | 16,545 | 18,594 | 20,250 | 21,334 | 24,903 | 28,258 | 87.3 |
| Williamson | 3,945 | 4,234 | 4,630 | 4,747 | 5,261 | 5,521 | 5,947 | 50.7 |
| Winnebago | 15,623 | 17,188 | 18,478 | 19,546 | 21,777 | 24,643 | 26,830 | 71.7 |
| Woodford | 789 | 859 | 918 | 1,002 | 1,270 | 1,507 | 1,620 | 105.3 |
| Chicago | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |

Action Steps

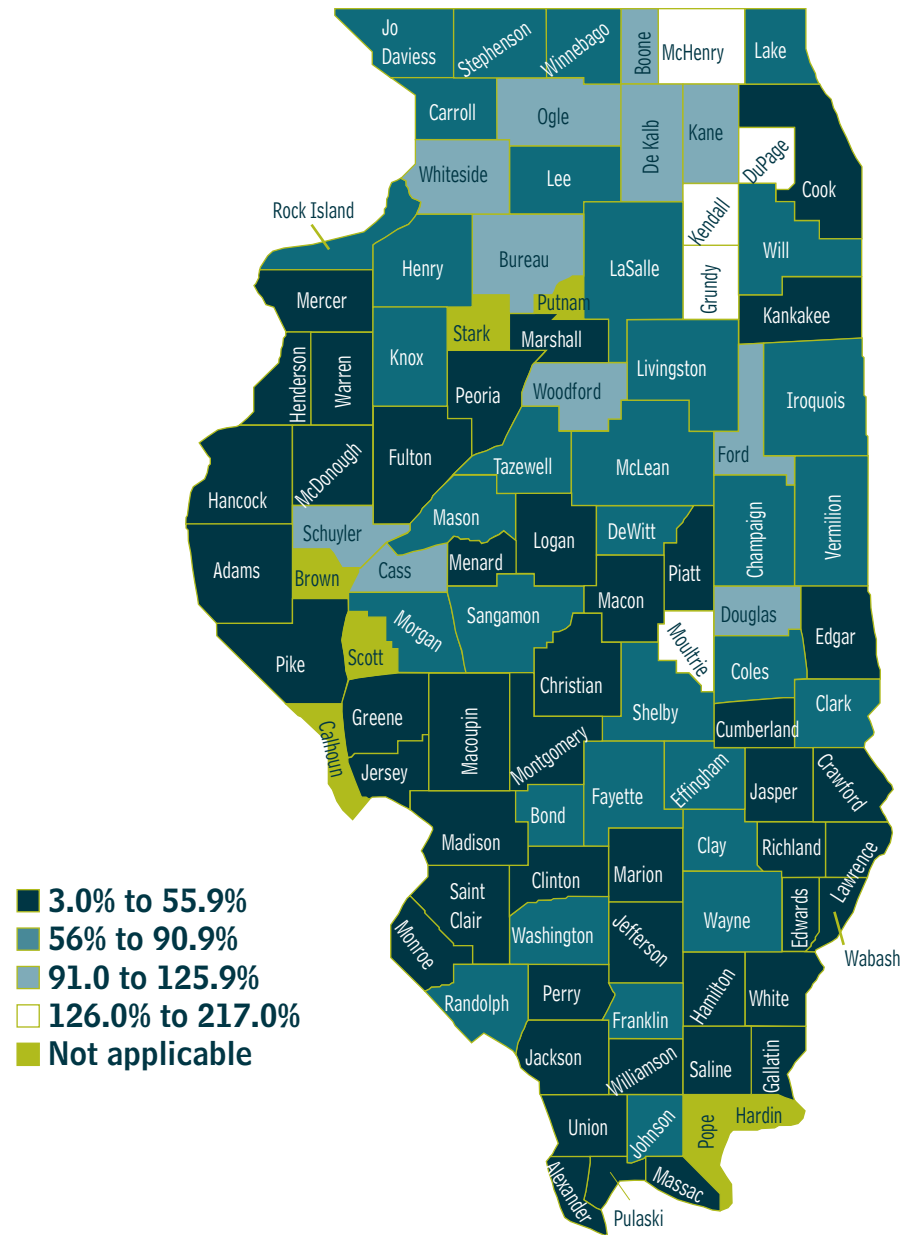
Uninsured children often do not receive care for common health problems such as ear infections. Children in poor health are more likely to be absent from school as well as have physical and emotional problems that interfere with academics.¹ Recommended action steps include:

- Expand outreach efforts to ensure that all children who qualify for KidCare and Medicaid are enrolled.
- Increase KidCare eligibility to 250 percent of the federal poverty level so that an additional 25,000 low-income children can receive coverage.
- Increase state funding for the FamilyCare health insurance program that covers low-income, working parents by \$66 million by fiscal year 2006. This will provide coverage to as many as 300,000 uninsured parents and will allow Illinois to take advantage of significant federal matching funds. Parents who have health coverage are more likely to make sure their children get regular medical attention.

¹ Schwartz, C. & Lui, E., "The link between school performance and health insurance," *Consumer's Union*, October 2000.

KidCare and Medicaid Enrollment Increases, 1998 to 2004

More than 1.1 million Illinois children are enrolled in the KidCare and Medicaid health insurance programs for low-income children, a 42 percent increase since KidCare was created in 1997. The biggest enrollment growth has been largely in metropolitan Chicago – DuPage, Grundy, Kendall and McHenry counties – along with Moultrie County in central Illinois. However, an estimated 11 percent of Illinois children are still without health insurance. Uninsured children often do not receive care for common health problems such as ear infections, and children in poor health are more likely to miss school and have problems that interfere with academics.



Source: Illinois Department of Public Aid

Access to Health Care Includes Making Quality Services Accessible to Families

By Robyn Gabel, Executive Director
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition

The number of uninsured children in Illinois at any one time is estimated to be over 300,000. Children without health insurance are more likely to experience “avoidable” hospitalizations, have more absences from school and are more likely to die when hospitalized. Twenty percent of uninsured children have untreated vision problems.

Illinois has taken the lead in providing several state/federal funded programs of health insurance for children and their families. Medicaid, KidCare and FamilyCare are offered at low or no cost to children in families that earn up to twice the federal poverty level and to parents earning 133 percent of the federal poverty level. The programs consist of a generous benefits package that includes dental services, preventive health care, hospitalization, outpatient services, emergency room care and optometric services. Illinois has successfully enrolled over 1.1 million children and 405,000 parents in these insurance programs.

Children without health insurance are more likely to experience “avoidable” hospitalizations, have more absences from school and are more likely to die when hospitalized.

In addition to health insurance, ensuring access to health care also includes the availability of quality and accessible services. In that regard, Illinois needs a better system to monitor the access and quality of physician care to the families in the Medicaid and KidCare programs. Are doctors’ office hours accessible for working families? Are they located within a reasonable distance? Are the reimbursement rates from the state to the doctors fair? Are the doctors culturally competent? Are services provided in accordance with medical guidelines?

Further policy recommendations include modifying the KidCare program to be available to all Illinois children on a sliding premium scale, regardless of income or immigration status. Allowing eligibility for all uninsured children in Illinois decreases the stigma associated with the Medicaid program and will encourage all eligible children to enroll. FamilyCare, a state/federal funded program for the uninsured parents of eligible children, should be expanded to the same level as that for the KidCare program, currently twice the federal poverty level. This would reduce confusion and irregularities among the state/federal health insurance programs. And lastly, more outreach efforts must be made so that all eligible families are aware of Medicaid, KidCare and FamilyCare and can easily enroll.



Robyn Gabel (pictured reading to children, above) has been the Executive Director for the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition (IMCHC) since 1988. The IMCHC has over ninety organization members throughout the state and conducts policy development, education and advocacy to carry out its mission to improve the health of women and children in Illinois. Gabel has combined a career in the health field and politics for twenty five years. As an advocate for children, Gabel served on the Governor’s Legislative Task Force for the Child Health Insurance Program. Currently she is a member of many committees including the Immunization Advisory Committee for the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Medicaid Advisory Committee for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the Policy Committee for National Covering Kids and Families.