



Corzine says tax-return tactic helps children in low-income families get health benefits

By Susan Livio

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More than New Jersey 12,000 children from low-income families have been enrolled since June in Medicaid or in the free and low-cost health plan, FamilyCare, with the help of a n effort to find uninsured families through their tax returns, according to Gov. Jon Corzine.

Parents and guardians were asked to check a box on their state tax returns indicating whether any children in their home did not have health coverage. By following up with those uninsured families and sending them an application, the state enrolled roughly 12,000 new children from June to August, according to state Human Services data.

Most of the newly enrolled children came from working-poor families eligible for FamilyCare, an HMO-style health plan with modest or no co-pays or premiums based on their income. As of August, there were 142,514 children covered by FamilyCare, 7,700 more than in April. The remaining 4,300 came from low-income families who qualified for coverage through Medicaid, according to state data.

Corzine also announced the state would receive a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that will enable 10 school districts to hire employees who would help families enroll in FamilyCare if they work but lack health care, or Medicaid if they do not have steady income. School districts will compete for a share of the money, state officials said.

The federal government also awarded a \$1 million grant to the Health Research and Educational Trust of New Jersey, an affiliate of the New Jersey Hospital Association. The trust will use it to develop ways of enrolling uninsured children as they seek health care from hospitals and clinics.

Corzine, who is seeking re-election in November, said the recruitment drive brings the total to 100,000 children who have been enrolled in either FamilyCare or Medicaid since he took office in 2006.

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