

## **Closing the Coverage Gap Trends in Health Insurance Coverage for Children**

### **A National Success Story**

In recent years, much of the news about health care coverage for Americans has been discouraging. Health care costs are rising, states are struggling to pay for growing Medicaid costs, and employers are finding it more difficult to offer coverage that is affordable to workers and their families. These stories, however, often miss a surprising and yet very significant trend – the coverage gap for children has narrowed dramatically due largely to Medicaid and its smaller companion program, the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). As documented in a recent Center for Children and Families (CCF) report, since 1997, the uninsured rate of low-income children has been reduced by a third, driven largely by Medicaid and, to a lesser extent, SCHIP.<sup>1</sup> This success occurred even as an economic downturn and declines in employer-based coverage caused the uninsured rate of other Americans to jump significantly.

### **State-by-State Variation is Significant**

The national data mask significant variation across the states in how children are faring. To provide a state-specific perspective on this issue, CCF has analyzed these trends for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Table 1 shows changes in the uninsured rate of children of all income levels since 1996/1997, the era when SCHIP was adopted and states aggressively began improving coverage and conducting outreach campaigns in Medicaid and SCHIP. Table 2 provides comparable information for “low-income” children (defined as those below 200% of the federal poverty line or \$32,180 a year for a family of three in 2005). The analysis shows that in some states these coverage successes were even more remarkable than the national data suggest. For example, Arkansas, Maine, and South Carolina have cut the uninsured rate of children by more than half since 1996/1997.

### **A Note on the Numbers**

In compiling state-specific trends, CCF used data from the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey (CPS) because it is the only survey that can provide state-level information on trends in coverage for children back to 1997. For details on the methodology used to compile these numbers, see <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/pdfs/ncsl-datamethodology.pdf>. In some states, more recent or accurate data may be available from different sources, such as from a state-sponsored study on the uninsured.

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Children and Families, *A Success Story: Closing the Insurance Gap for America’s Children Through Medicaid and SCHIP*, July 2005, available at [www.ccf.georgetown.org](http://www.ccf.georgetown.org).



**Rate of Uninsurance for All Children 1996-97 vs. 2003-04**

STATE	1996-97	2003-04	% Change 96-97 03-04
Alabama	14%	9%	-37%*
Alaska	13%	12%	-8%
Arizona	26%	16%	-40%*
Arkansas	24%	10%	-61%*
California	19%	14%	-27%*
Colorado	16%	15%	-6%
Connecticut	12%	9%	-25%
Delaware	13%	11%	-17%
District of Columbia	14%	11%	-26%
Florida	20%	17%	-16%
Georgia	16%	13%	-20%
Hawaii	5%	8%	-44%
Idaho	17%	12%	-26%
Illinois	11%	12%	9%
Indiana	11%	11%	-8%
Iowa	10%	8%	-19%
Kansas	11%	7%	-30%
Kentucky	16%	10%	-36%*
Louisiana	23%	12%	-47%*
Maine	14%	6%	-56%*
Maryland	9%	10%	7%
Massachusetts	9%	8%	-11%
Michigan	8%	7%	-15%
Minnesota	8%	7%	-11%
Mississippi	19%	14%	-24%
Missouri	13%	8%	-33%*
Montana	14%	18%	23%
Nebraska	10%	7%	-27%
Nevada	20%	18%	-9%
New Hampshire	10%	7%	-31%
New Jersey	17%	12%	-29%*
New Mexico	19%	15%	-20%
New York	15%	10%	-26%*
North Carolina	18%	12%	-30%*
North Dakota	14%	10%	-30%
Ohio	10%	9%	-15%
Oklahoma	19%	19%	0%
Oregon	14%	12%	-12%
Pennsylvania	8%	11%	32%
Rhode Island	7%	7%	-7%
South Carolina	20%	9%	-52%*
South Dakota	9%	9%	-2%
Tennessee	15%	12%	-23%
Texas	25%	22%	-14%*
Utah	12%	11%	-7%
Vermont	6%	6%	-10%
Virginia	12%	9%	-23%
Washington	11%	8%	-20%
West Virginia	11%	9%	-13%
Wisconsin	6%	8%	33%
Wyoming	13%	12%	-7%
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>-20%*</b>

Note: \* denotes a statistically significant percent change, given a 90% confidence interval.  
 Source: CCF analysis of Current Population Survey data

**Rate of Uninsurance for Low-income Children 1996-97 vs. 2003-04**

STATE	1996-97	2003-04	% Change 96-97 03-04
Alabama	23%	13%	-43%*
Alaska	27%	19%	-30%
Arizona	39%	24%	-40%*
Arkansas	32%	10%	-68%*
California	27%	21%	-25%*
Colorado	29%	30%	2%
Connecticut	22%	17%	-22%
Delaware	27%	19%	-30%
District of Columbia	16%	15%	-4%
Florida	29%	24%	-17%
Georgia	26%	21%	-21%
Hawaii	7%	11%	65%
Idaho	26%	18%	-30%
Illinois	19%	21%	8%
Indiana	23%	17%	-24%
Iowa	16%	18%	14%
Kansas	19%	14%	-25%
Kentucky	24%	17%	-32%*
Louisiana	32%	19%	-42%*
Maine	22%	10%	-54%*
Maryland	21%	20%	-3%
Massachusetts	16%	15%	-5%
Michigan	15%	11%	-26%
Minnesota	15%	17%	11%
Mississippi	26%	19%	-27%
Missouri	21%	15%	-30%*
Montana	21%	24%	12%
Nebraska	13%	13%	-3%
Nevada	35%	30%	-13%
New Hampshire	20%	15%	-25%
New Jersey	31%	26%	-18%
New Mexico	26%	19%	-27%
New York	23%	14%	-40%*
North Carolina	30%	19%	-37%*
North Dakota	23%	19%	-16%
Ohio	18%	15%	-13%
Oklahoma	27%	25%	-5%
Oregon	26%	18%	-31%
Pennsylvania	15%	19%	33%
Rhode Island	16%	12%	-22%
South Carolina	34%	15%	-55%*
South Dakota	13%	13%	0%
Tennessee	21%	18%	-14%
Texas	36%	30%	-18%*
Utah	21%	18%	-13%
Vermont	5%	7%	45%
Virginia	21%	17%	-19%
Washington	19%	13%	-31%*
West Virginia	13%	12%	-5%
Wisconsin	9%	13%	39%
Wyoming	21%	15%	-27%
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>-21%*</b>

Note: \* denotes a statistically significant percent change, given a 90% confidence interval.  
 Source: CCF analysis of Current Population Survey data