



Georgetown University Report Finds Child Uninsured Rate Improved in 2022; Progress That is Under Threat as Eligible Children Lose Coverage During Medicaid Redeterminations

Washington, D.C. – The number of uninsured children declined in 2022 to one of the lowest levels in history due largely to a federal law designed to ensure children, parents and others enrolled in Medicaid had stable coverage during the pandemic, according to a new report by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. The uninsured rate for children was 5.1% in 2022 compared to 5.7% in 2019, the year before Medicaid’s pandemic-era continuous coverage protection was put in place.

Nationally, child uninsured rates fell in every demographic group, with children of nearly every age, race and ethnicity, and family income level seeing an improvement. American Indian and Alaska Native children and children in low-income families saw the biggest reductions in their uninsured rates.

“This shows that removing barriers to Medicaid enrollment is an effective way to keep kids covered,” said Joan Alker, executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families and research professor at the McCourt School of Public Policy. “Unfortunately, this positive trend is likely short-lived. As states wind down continuous coverage protections and redetermine eligibility for everyone enrolled in Medicaid, we’re witnessing large coverage losses among children, many of whom are likely still eligible. We anticipate this will translate into larger numbers of uninsured children — especially in states where state leaders are not prioritizing the needs of children.”

The Medicaid continuous coverage protection ended in April 2023 and state Medicaid agencies started the unprecedented task of redetermining eligibility for all Medicaid enrollees, leading to large net declines in Medicaid enrollment including an estimated two million children and counting. The vast majority of children losing Medicaid coverage during the unwinding are still eligible, according to federal estimates.

“The gains in Medicaid coverage we have seen over the past few years have been vital in keeping patients like mine safe and healthy,” said Valerie Borum Smith, MD, MPH, FAAP, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Committee on Federal Government Affairs and President-elect of the Texas Pediatric Society. “Young people have faced crisis after crisis, from a years-long pandemic to last fall’s surge in pediatric respiratory illnesses to the ongoing youth mental health emergency. Disrupting access to affordable, quality care threatens the physical and mental health of kids and teens across the board. We must do everything we can to keep families covered.”

The Georgetown University CCF researchers examined the period between 2019 and 2022 using the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey data. The state-by-state

analysis found an improvement in the rate and/or number of uninsured children in 21 states. Wyoming, North Dakota, Utah, New Mexico, and Texas experienced the greatest improvements in child health coverage. Only four states — Iowa, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin — saw statistically significant increases in child uninsurance rates between 2019 and 2022, according to the census data. Texas has the largest number of uninsured children and highest child uninsured rate in the nation.

“This report shows that when Texas was forced to remove barriers to coverage during the pandemic, the child uninsured rate improved,” said Stacey Pogue, senior policy analyst with Every Texan. “Sadly, now that those federal protections have expired, children are back in harm’s way and Texas has become ground zero for children losing health coverage. No state has cut off Medicaid to more children than Texas and this report shows that no state has a worse record on the number of uninsured children. Alarming, for 4 in 5 Texas kids removed from Medicaid, the state did not confirm whether the child remained eligible or not and it’s likely that most still qualify.”

The full report is available [here](#) and more in-depth state data is available on the center’s [interactive child health report](#).

The Center for Children and Families is a nonpartisan policy and research center based at Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy. This is the center’s twelfth annual report on child health coverage.