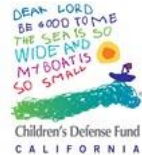




CHILDREN NOW



PICO California
Unlocking the Power of People™



Health for All: Covering Our Immigrant Children

All California children deserve a healthy start in life. Health coverage for children, including immigrant children, has numerous benefits in the short- and long-term – children with coverage grow up healthier and learn better in school. California is home to more than 550,000 immigrant children and millions more who have immigrant parents.¹ One in six children in California have a parent who is undocumented and 81% of those children are citizens.¹ Unfortunately, many children in immigrant families are uninsured and have unmet health needs that can hinder healthy development.

The Benefits of Covering Immigrant Children and Families

Covering undocumented uninsured children with comprehensive Medi-Cal is cost-effective.

Providing comprehensive Medi-Cal with preventive care to children costs the state less than providing emergency services through Medi-Cal. Currently, the state pays \$137 per month for each child enrolled in restricted Medi-Cal (limited emergency benefits available to undocumented immigrants – 142,000 children are currently enrolled). Enrolling children in full-scope Medi-Cal costs an estimated \$113 per child, per month.² The new costs to provide Medi-Cal to all undocumented children is negligible.

California is stronger when everyone has access to health care, including our immigrant children and families. Creating a true system of health coverage for all Californians will guarantee that all family members can access health care without fear or unnecessary barriers.

Health coverage has a positive impact on children's health and academic performance. Children with health coverage get regular care that can help avoid costly hospitalizations and long term consequences of treatable conditions.³ California children who newly enroll in health coverage have been shown to have a 60% improvement in school performance and paying attention in class.⁴

Covering parents and caregivers makes it more likely that children receive needed care.

Providing coverage to uninsured parents is essential to helping the whole family get the care they need to stay healthy and secure. Research shows that insured children whose parents are also insured are more likely to receive check-ups and other preventive care, compared to insured children whose parents are uninsured.⁵ In addition, previous health coverage expansions for parents have led to a significant increase in enrollment of eligible children and a drop in the number of uninsured children.^v

Covering parents and caregivers improves the health and well-being of their children. The Institute of Medicine has reported that a parent's poor physical or mental health can contribute to a stressful family environment that may impair the health or well-being of a child.^v Moreover, uninsured parents who cannot access care may be unable to work or may end up with big medical bills when they do get care, which can have a devastating financial effect on families and children.

¹ Pastor, Manuel and Enrico A. Marcelli. 2013. "What's at Stake for the State: Undocumented Californians, Immigration Reform, and Our Future Together." USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration.

² Lucia, et al, 2015 "A Little Investment Goes a Long Way: Modest Cost to Expand Preventive and Routine Health Services to All Low-Income Californians" UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research.

³ Cousineau, Michael, et al. 2008. "Preventable Hospitalizations Among Children in California Counties After Child Health Insurance Expansion Initiatives." *Medical Care*.

⁴ Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board. 2004. "The Healthy Families Program Health Status Assessment Final Report."

⁵ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. 2013. "Expanding Coverage for Parents Helps Children."

The Health of Our Immigrant Children Is At Risk

Many undocumented immigrant children are uninsured. Undocumented immigrants are currently ineligible for coverage through Medi-Cal or Covered California. Despite the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), 170,000 California children are estimated to remain uninsured due to their immigration status.⁶

Even U.S.-born, citizen children of undocumented immigrants are more likely to be uninsured. As citizens themselves, many children in families with mixed immigration status are eligible for free or low-cost coverage, but are not enrolled, often due to fear that undocumented family members might be identified and reported to immigration authorities as the result of their children's participation. U.S.-born children of undocumented parents are twice as likely to lack health insurance as children born to citizens.⁷

Children of undocumented parents are less likely to visit a doctor or dentist. Almost 40% of children of undocumented parents have not seen a doctor in the past year compared to 25% of the children of documented parents.^{vii} Additionally, only 53% of undocumented children and 58% of children in mixed-status families visited a dentist in the past year compared with 77% of children in families where both parents are citizens.⁸ Half of uninsured immigrant youth reported delaying getting the medical care they felt they needed due to cost or lack of insurance.⁹

Most children of undocumented parents live in poverty. Two-thirds of children in California with at least one undocumented parent live below 150% of the federal poverty line (equivalent to \$29,685 for a family of three).¹⁰ Children of undocumented parents also face greater barriers to accessing social services and programs and tend to have worse social, economic and health outcomes.¹¹

Children of undocumented parents experience higher levels of anxiety and stress. Nearly 30% of undocumented parents reported that their children were afraid either all or most of the time, much higher than among children of documented parents. Almost three-fourths of undocumented parents reported that their child had shown symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.^{xi}

The California Children's Health Coverage Coalition is committed to ensuring that all California children and families have access to affordable, comprehensive health coverage, regardless of immigration status.

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⁶ Lucia, Laurel et al. 2015. "Which Californians will Lack Health Insurance under the Affordable Care Act?" UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education and UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

⁷ Human Impact Partners. 2013. "Family Unity, Family Health: How Family-Focused Immigration Reform Will Mean Better Health for Children and Families."

⁸ Wallace, Steven, et. al. 2012. "Undocumented Immigrants and Health Care Reform." UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

⁹ Dream Resource Center. 2014. "Undocumented and Uninsured: Part 2: Band-Aid Care."

¹⁰ Pastor. "What's at Stake for the State."

¹¹ Human Impact Partners. "Family Unity, Family Health."