

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

May 2007

Site of the Month

Dr. William O'Hare of the Annie E. Casey Foundation held a telephone conference with state KIDS COUNT grantees to discuss the release of his policy brief on rural children's reliance on publicly funded health-insurance programs. He began the conference by delineating the two major points of the brief: (1) rural children are more dependent on State Child Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP) than are urban (metropolitan) children (32 versus 26 percent) and (2) the percentage of children covered by parent employer-sponsored health insurance fell from 1998 to 2005, whereas the proportion of children covered by publicly funded health insurance increased during the same period.

O'Hare analyzed Current Population Survey (CPS) data as it is the only source that allows separate urban and rural area analysis state by state. He noted that the CPS under-reports coverage compared to surveys that focus on health only, such as the National Health Interview Survey. Some key findings from his analysis of the CPS data include:

- ◆ 8.3 million children under age 18 were uninsured in 2005.
- ◆ More than three-fourths of children not insured lived in households where at least one parent worked full time.
- ◆ Eleven percent of children in rural and in urban areas were uninsured.
- ◆ Of the racial/ethnic groups, Hispanics were the most likely to be uninsured.
- ◆ Vermont ranked number one (best) on the percent of children with no health insurance.
- ◆ Nevada ranked 39th on the percent of children with no health insurance with 7,300 children uninsured (16 percent).

O'Hare concluded that leaders and child advocates in rural areas have a stake in expanding the SCHIP program due to the areas' jarring economic changes. In addition, public support for health-insurance coverage for children, especially low-income children, is strong, which should lend support for expanding SCHIP programs.

Rural Children Increasingly Rely on Medicaid and State Child Health Insurance Programs for Medical Care, a publication of the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire, is available at: http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/documents/RuralChildHealth_final.pdf.

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