

Empowering Texas Families: Connecting Children to Essential Health Programs Through School Outreach

Equip families with health insurance eligibility information at school enrollment.

Texas Has the Highest Children's Uninsured Rate in the Nation

Health coverage is a crucial factor in ensuring children grow up healthy and thrive, yet too many Texas children remain uninsured. **Texas' children's uninsured rate is 11.9% – the highest rate of uninsured children in the country.**¹ Texas children lacking health coverage is a statewide issue. Several metro areas, including Abilene, Beaumont, Brownsville, Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, Laredo, Longview, McAllen, Midland, Sherman, and Waco, have an uninsured rate more than double the national average of 5.1%.²

Insufficient Information for Parents Prevents Them from Enrolling Eligible Children in Health Coverage

Nearly half of uninsured children in Texas qualify for Medicaid/CHIP but are not enrolled.³ A major contributor to this issue is a lack of awareness – many parents simply do not know their children qualify for Medicaid or CHIP. Indeed, one Texas study found that **nearly half of surveyed parents with uninsured but eligible children were unaware of their child's eligibility.**⁴ There are no designated places where parents are informed about Medicaid/CHIP, leaving many without the knowledge needed to enroll their children in coverage. However, when children are enrolled in these programs, the benefits are clear. Medicaid health insurance ensures children can attend regular check-ups⁵ and get healthy and back to school when they're out sick.⁶

Ensure Parents Have the Information to Make the Best Choice for Their Children

This bill would help connect already-eligible children to health coverage without expanding eligibility. Under this bill, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission would share flyers with Medicaid/CHIP and SNAP eligibility information with Texas school districts. Education groups, like the Texas Association of School Boards, support Texas schools including flyers in enrollment packets, either digitally or in print, to ensure that parents receive clear, straightforward information about their children's coverage options in a setting they are already engaged with. We encourage the Legislature to support this approach to empower Texas families to make informed decisions to support their children's health.



¹ Children's Health Care Report Card, Texas (2024). Georgetown Center for Children and Families. Retrieved at: <https://kidshealthcarereport.ccf.georgetown.edu/states/texas/>

² Medicaid's Pandemic-Era Continuous Coverage Protections Helped Reduce Number of Uninsured Children (2023). Georgetown Center for Children and Families. Retrieved at: <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2023/11/15/medicaids-pandemic-era-continuous-coverage-protections-helped-reduce-number-of-uninsured-children>

³ Almost Half of Uninsured TX Kids are Eligible for Medicaid or CHIP (2024). Texans Care for Children. Retrieved at: <https://txchildren.org/posts/2024/2/1/report-almost-half-of-uninsured-tx-kids-are-eligible-for-medicaid-or-chip>

⁴ A cross-sectional study of parental awareness of and reasons for lack of health insurance among minority children, and the impact on health, access to care, and unmet needs (2016). G. Flores, et al. Retrieved at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4802608/>

⁵ Children's Health Coverage: The Role of Medicaid and CHIP and Issues for the Future (2016). Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved at: <https://www.kff.org/report-section/childrens-health-coverage-the-role-of-medicaid-and-chip-and-issues-for-the-future-issue-brief/>

⁶ Yeung, R., Gunton, B., Kalbacher, D., Seltzer, J., & Wesolowski, H. (2011). Can Health Insurance Reduce School Absenteeism? Education and Urban Society, 43(6), 696-721. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124510381379>