

[Center for Children and Families at Georgetown]

Media Release

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50-State Analysis Shows Number of Uninsured Children Declined Over Past Two Years

Washington, D.C. – The number of children living in poverty remained high yet the number of uninsured children decreased from 6.4 million in 2009 to 5.5 million in 2011, according to a [new report](#) by Georgetown University Health Policy Institute's Center for Children and Families. This builds on the good news reported for young adult coverage gains in September.

"Children need health care coverage to grow and thrive so this is good news not only for America's children but also for our nation's future," said Joan Alker, Co-Executive Director of the Georgetown University research center. "The success is due to a strong commitment to children's health coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the protection of children's eligibility levels under the Affordable Care Act."

The [study](#), which examined trends from 2009-2011, found that twenty states showed significant declines in their rates of uninsurance among children. Texas and Oregon led the nation with declines of 3.1 percentage points, with Florida close behind at 2.9 percentage points. For some of these states, such as Texas and Florida, it was easier to make progress because they started with such a high rate of uninsured children, according to the Georgetown University researchers.

"While the nation is on the right track, the forward momentum slowed down in the past year and children still have a long way to go to reach the same coverage level enjoyed by older Americans," according to Alker. "About 93 percent of children have health care coverage while the success of Medicaid's companion program, Medicare, has brought the insured rate for seniors up to 99 percent."

Only in Massachusetts has the insurance rate for children (98 percent) neared that level as the state has already put in place its own health reform law, a law that the Affordable Care Act was modeled upon.

The [report](#) also found that Nevada has the highest rate of uninsured children (16.2 percent). Half of the nation's uninsured children live in just five states: Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, Arizona, and New York.

"Next year will be a watershed moment for state leaders as they make important decisions about bringing home the benefits of the Affordable Care Act for their residents," said Alker. "States can make the next big leap forward for kids by taking advantage of the generous federal support to extend health coverage to low-income parents and adults through Medicaid."

Research has shown that covering parents is good for children as families enroll in coverage together and children are more likely to receive preventive services and other care they need.

The report, based on data from the American Community Survey, also found disparities in insurance rates among demographic groups. Nationwide, Hispanic and school-aged children were disproportionately uninsured as well as those living in rural areas.