



Forum Summary: Maximizing Enrollment of Medicaid and CHP+ Eligible Kids Using Existing School Data

Colorado can do better to enroll the estimated 78,000 eligible but unenrolled kids in Medicaid or CHP+. On Friday, March 12, 2010, Colorado schools, advocates, and state partners gathered to learn from national and local experts about opportunities and strategies to increase and improve school-based enrollment in Medicaid and CHP+, including sharing school lunch data and the use of registration card information. Sponsored by All Kids Covered, *Maximizing Enrollment of Medicaid and CHP+ Eligible Kids Using Existing School Data*, created an opportunity for participants to ask questions, share experiences, and take ideas back to their communities and organizations.

Kids Coverage in Colorado

Of the 1.3 million kids in Colorado; 68% have private insurance, 20% are enrolled in Medicaid or CHP+, and 12% are uninsured. Insurance provides access to care, can prevent disease or problems from arising in the future, and helps to ensure that kids are ready to learn at school. Colorado's Medicaid and CHP+ programs provide quality, affordable health care for kids who might not otherwise have access. Children with coverage are more likely than their uninsured peers to have a regular provider of care, fewer unmet health needs, and improved access to dental care. There are 153,000 uninsured children in Colorado. Of those, 30% are under the age of six, and two thirds live in families with incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level. The good news is that more than half of the uninsured kids in Colorado are already eligible for Medicaid or CHP+.

Lessons from Wisconsin

Working with schools and student data the state of Wisconsin has implemented several successful strategies to enroll eligible but unenrolled children. It is important to note that insurance status is not static and can change throughout the year and that several barriers exist that keep eligible families from applying for coverage. To that end, implementing several strategies to identify uninsured kids is necessary to be successful.

First and foremost, the use of Free and Reduced School Lunch data can help identify kids that are likely eligible for either Medicaid or CHIP. A [USDA letter from 2000](#) states that "schools and institutions may disclose free and reduced price meal or free milk eligibility information to identify and enroll eligible children in State Medicaid or SCHIP, providing the determining agency's State agency and determining agency elect to do so." Agencies must give families the opportunity to opt-out of this information sharing.

The second strategy, if a school district chooses to collect it, is the sharing of health insurance status. This strategy requires that parents opt-in or provide active consent to schools to share this information. In addition, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires several specific elements around active consent.

Both strategies require compliance with current laws, addressing privacy concerns, navigating a school's process (including timelines, development of materials), and determining if either strategy is a good fit

for your school district. Wisconsin created a [toolbox](#) for school districts that includes templates, research, and data.

Lessons from Colorado

Pueblo StepUp

Several organizations and schools in Colorado have partnered to improve enrollment of Medicaid and CHP+ eligible kids. Pueblo StepUp has developed a model that is currently being replicated in school districts across the state. Pueblo City Schools identify uninsured children via a question about the child's health insurance status on the school district's enrollment card, which also includes a parental consent to release information. Pueblo StepUp uses the school district's existing database, Infinite Campus, with student enrollment information to run a report that compares the names of uninsured children with the names of the children who receive a free- or reduced-price lunch. This list is then compared with the names of children who are already enrolled in Medicaid or CHP+ using the Colorado Benefits Management System. Key to their success is engaging the right partners from the start - including the nutrition director, school Medicaid coordinator, school-based health center staff, the district superintendent, and information technology staff.

CASBHC

The Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care (CASBHC) was awarded a Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Outreach and Enrollment Grant in late 2009. CASBHC's grant focuses on school-age children, reaching underserved populations, and replicates Pueblo StepUp's model using school based health centers at five pilot sites in Montrose, Durango, Greeley-Evans, Community Health Services, Inc, and Peak Vista Community Health Center. CASBHC and Pueblo StepUp are working together to support the five pilot sites.

Key Themes to Ensure Success of School-Based Enrollment Efforts

Key themes from the speakers and participants about successful school-based enrollment emerged:

- Schools are a great place to enroll kids because they are seen by parents as a trusted entity and enrollment processes can become institutionalized within a school or district, thus ensuring sustainability.
- Start-up and maintenance of enrollment efforts requires resources. Groups interested in working on school-based enrollment need to clearly assess their capacity to implement these outreach and enrollment strategies and seek resources and support if necessary.
- Clear support from the Colorado's Department of Education on data sharing policy is helpful.
- Invite necessary key stakeholders to participate from the start and communicate frequently.
- Gain buy-in from schools when asking for data by presenting the specific policy on allowable data sharing, why the data is important, and how the data will be used.
- Once uninsured children are identified, immediate follow-up with the family works best to increase likelihood of enrollment.
- Reach out to community partners to learn about the available resources in your community to make appropriate referrals and receive updated information about program and policy changes to Medicaid or CHIP.

School-Based Grant Opportunity from The Colorado Health Foundation

The Colorado Health Foundation (TCHF) seeks to fund two-year grants to create partnerships between school districts and county departments of human/social services or other state-designated medical assistance sites. Visit http://www.coloradohealth.org/student_enrollment.aspx to learn more. To apply, please use TCHF's [online grant application](#). TCHF has four grant application deadlines per year; the next deadline is April 15. Please contact Amy Latham at ALatham@ColoradoHealth.org with questions.

More Information

For additional information about the *Maximizing Enrollment* Forum, including speaker presentations, and the All Kids Covered Initiative, please visit www.allkidscoveredcolorado.org or contact [Brittney Petersen](#).