Medicaid Expansion Highlighted as Potential Solution to Caregiver Shortage

A nationwide caregiver shortage has resulted in children with disabilities being denied necessary health care. In 2017, PHI released an issue brief citing increasing consumer demand and inadequate compensation for workers as key factors behind this shortage. The COVID-19 pandemic has only made things worse.

A 2022 report from the Mesothelioma Center ranked Tennessee among the top five worst states in number of caregivers with only 8 caregivers per 1,000 residents. Additionally, the state provides an average salary of a mere $12.28/hour. Tennessee is facing a landscape in which children are in dire need of care, yet the state is failing to invest in the workforce to meet this need.

At TJC, we have heard countless stories across the state of families struggling to secure vital care due to this shortage. One mother in East Tennessee has been waiting more than 18 months to receive in-home care for her son. A couple in Southern Tennessee scrambled to find caregivers after their former caregiver quit due to low wages. Similarly, a couple in middle Tennessee struggled to maintain their jobs after having to devote their time to caring for their daughter due to the state’s inability to find behavioral specialists willing to work for $8/hour.
The demand for in-home and community-based services is not going away, so the focus must be hiring and retaining caregivers. Research shows 50 percent of care workers leave their jobs within 12 months. While there are several reasons for this high turnover, former caregivers continuously cite unlivable wages and thin benefits as reasons for their departures.

One report highlights Medicaid expansion as a means to secure health care benefits for caregivers which could incentivize them to stay. Click here to read the full joint-report from Georgetown’s Center for Children and Families, The Center for Law and Social Policy, and the Build Initiative.

Partner with Insure Our Kids!

Insure Our Kids is a coalition bringing the medical community and non-profit organizations into a space where policy and healthcare issues are discussed. Please join us! We need your voice! Take our partner survey here.

Contact Shana Watkins at swatkins@tnjustice.org if you have any more questions

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Giving Tuesday

On November 29, TJC participated in Giving Tuesday along with other community organizations worldwide in an effort to raise money to support our mission. We could not be more grateful for our donors and fundraisers who helped us raise $15,405.91. These contributions will help us change lives as we work to secure necessary healthcare and food benefits for Tennesseans.

Events

On December 2, TJC participated in Winterfest: Under the Stars Community Event, tabling alongside community partners and distributing information about health access and health equity. The event also featured a vaccine clinic in which 27 people received COVID-19 and flu vaccines.

The following week, King Child Health Fellow Asia Porter spoke at a town hall with Metro Nashville Public Schools about the Family Glitch resolution and Open Enrollment for Marketplace plans.
Most recently, on December 9, TJC co-hosted the Community Partnership Luncheon & Awards Celebration with Nashville Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA). The celebration was an opportunity to recognize the amazing work being done in the Napier-Sudekum neighborhood by residents and community organizations. In total, TJC and MDHA presented 12 awards to honor these contributions.

TJC in the News

- [Report: Tennessee Ranks 44th For Health Outcomes](#)
- [Tennessee’s Medicaid adult dental benefits starts Jan. 1. Here’s what you need to know](#)
- [Tennessee Justice Center to Receive $80K Cy Pres Award](#)
- [For the Uninsured, Covid Care Has Entered a New Stage of Crisis](#)

FEDERAL UPDATES

ACA Open Enrollment Continues
Open Enrollment for Marketplace Plans through the Affordable Care Act is open! The priority deadline to have coverage start on January 1 has already passed; however, individuals can still apply until January 15 and have their coverage start on February 1. Even if you were previously ineligible for an ACA plan, you may now qualify, for eligibility guidelines have changed. Click here to learn more about the Family Glitch resolution and what it may mean for your family.

Redeterminations are expected to begin in the spring. During the last redetermination period, 128,000 children lost coverage, many of whom were still eligible for coverage. To avoid disenrollment for eligible children, it is important that TennCare has enrollees’ current address information. If your address has changed, call TennCare at 1-855-259-0701 or make a change to your account online through the TennCare Connect portal.

Update TennCare If Your Address Has Changed!

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Partnerships to End Hunger

Thursday, January 19th
1 PM CST - 2 PM CST

REGISTER
"Color of Care": A Claiborne Worship Center Panel Event

Saturday, January 21st
6 PM – 8 PM CST

REGISTER

KEEP UP WITH TJC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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