



THE CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

As we look back on 2017, TJC's children's team is so thankful for Tennessee's network of tireless children's advocates, including you.

Without you, we could not have directly helped 106 children and provided \$805,547 in benefits for children in Tennessee.

We have used our break to rest, reflect and recharge for all the wonderful opportunities to improve children's health in Tennessee that 2018 holds.

In 2018, we will continue to serve clients and provide trainings, policy primers, fact sheets, newsletters and action items so that we all are the most informed and engaged advocates that we can be.

We hope that you will stand with us as we launch our Enroll Every Eligible Child Campaign and expand our nutrition advocacy. Let's continue to raise our voices to protect the best interest of every child in Tennessee.

HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED

Through Access to Healthcare



ENROLL EVERY ELIGIBLE CHILD CAMPAIGN

We can help with enrollment, redetermination, or service issues with TennCare and CoverKids. Call **615-255-0331**.

DIRECT SERVICE

Partner with us in 2018 to enroll every eligible child in Tennessee on health insurance. Email **Anna Walton** at: awalton@tnjustice.org.



We provide trainings on how to navigate TennCare and CoverKids. Email **Thomas Bynum**: tbynum@tnjustice.org

TRAININGS

Through Good Nutrition

SNAP, formerly Food Stamps

Many families across TN could be getting SNAP but aren't. That doesn't just hurt families; it could cost local schools funding. To learn more about SNAP and how to help families with kids access the program email **Cassandra Lockridge**: clockridge@tnjustice.org



SCHOOL BREAKFAST

175,000 low-income TN kids are missing out on school breakfast. We can fix this. To learn more about how you can be breakfast champion email **Madison Wall**: mwall@tnjustice.org

Stay connected with us through our social media!



<https://twitter.com/TNJusticeCenter>



<https://www.facebook.com/tnjustice>



Click [here](#) for a PDF version of the flyer.

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ICYMI



TJC client Julie Whitacre shares her story of fighting for her daughter, Ava Gray, to get the services she needs.

Our [CHIP sign-on letter](#) now has 436 signatures and counting! Thank you to everyone who has signed on so far. **Sign on and share with the letter with your networks to help us get 1000 signatures before the end of January!**

Please reply to this email if your family or someone you know has benefited from the CoverKids program directly.

TJC Executive Director, Michele Johnson, was quoted in the Johnson City Press, ["Health coverage for 106,000 Tennessee children, pregnant mothers in limbo"](#).

"There is about 30 years of research that shows if kids have comprehensive health coverage in the beginning, they're more likely to do well in school, they're more likely to earn more as adults (and) they're more likely to not need government assistance as adults," Johnson said. "So it's an investment that really pays for itself for generations if we can make sure we give these kids a healthy start."

[The last volume of the Children's Champion.](#)

THE MORE YOU KNOW

TennCare Redetermination

The same state policies, computer problems and administrative shortcomings that impede enrollment in TennCare threaten the coverage of several hundred thousand current TennCare beneficiaries who undergo annual redetermination.

TJC has received a flood of calls from Tennesseans who have discovered their benefits have been terminated by TennCare, including older Americans with Medicare Savings Program (MSP) benefits. MSPs are programs administered by TennCare that assist low-income people pay for the out-of-pocket costs of

Medicare, including premiums, deductibles, coinsurance, and co-pays.

These problems were widely reported in the media this summer.

[See [Morristown Medicare recipient removed from savings program after confusing mailer](#); [Seniors left scrambling after TennCare makes cuts to Social Security checks](#); [Springfield family caught in TennCare enrollment gap](#).]

This coverage prompted Speaker Beth Harwell to ask the Tennessee Comptroller to open an investigation into problems with TennCare's eligibility redetermination process. The Comptroller completed his review and issued a [report and recommendations](#) on December 6, 2017. The report found that TennCare enrollees "identified issues with coverage being terminated without warning, lengthy call center wait times, coverage being temporarily lost when packets are returned by the due date, and other problems" and recommended that TennCare implement several changes to the redetermination process. Harwell, meanwhile, said in a letter to Dr. Wendy Long, who heads TennCare, that she wants the agency to submit a report to her in 60 days on what comptroller recommendations they've adopted or else "explain the reasons for not implementing them."

The release of the report generated further media coverage of the problems. [See [TennCare: As some Tennesseans go hungry to pay for health insurance, Comptroller's review highlights weaknesses, progress](#); [State auditor: Some TennCare enrollees having problems renewing Medicaid coverage](#).]

We will continue to monitor TennCare's implementation of the Comptroller's recommendations and other problems with the redetermination process and take steps to ensure that the process is fair and accurate.

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal level:

Several important health programs, including the **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)** and the **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program**, have still not been fully funded.

In the Continuing Resolution that Congress passed on 12/22, CHIP was given some emergency funds to keep state programs running through the next few months, but many states are still sending out notices about shutting down their programs due to congressional uncertainty.

If you'd like to take more action on CHIP, please write a letter to the editor, urging our senators and representatives to pass a clean, five-year extension of CHIP.

If you'd like to take action on MIECHV, please visit the Home Visiting Coalition's [Take Action page](#).

State level:

The Tennessee Blue Ribbon Task Force on Juvenile Justice issued their [final report](#) in December 2017.

Through this consensus-based process, the Task Force developed the below data-driven, research-based, fiscally sound policy recommendations that:

- Prevent deeper juvenile justice system involvement of lower-level youth through early response;
- Protect public safety and contain costs by focusing system resources on the highest-risk youth; and
- Sustain effective practices through continued oversight and reinvestment in a stronger continuum of evidence-based services statewide.

Currently, there are more than 1,100 youth in DCS custody for unruly or delinquent offenses. If enacted together, these policies are projected to reduce the delinquent and unruly population in DCS custody by 36 percent by FY 2024, compared to projections for the population absent policy changes, and yield an estimated \$36 million in averted state costs over five years. The Task Force recommends that this full amount be reinvested in a continuum of in-home and community-based services that research indicates will improve recidivism rates and other outcomes, as compared to placements that may lead to higher rates of recidivism and may cost the state more than \$230,000 per youth per year. The Task Force further recommends that the state make up to a \$4.5 million upfront investment in FY 2018-2019 to support and stimulate the implementation of the recommendations contained herein.

JOIN US

Tuesday, January 9, is the first day of TN's legislative session, and we need you to join us at the TN Capitol to tell our legislators to Bring It Home.

BRING IT HOME

DOLLARS. JOBS. HEALTHCARE.

Congress has been unable to fix the health care problems that worry Tennessee families. Most other states, led by officials of both parties, are making use of federal funds available to address their states' health care needs. Tennessee legislators prevented Governor Haslam from bringing those funds home to protect and grow jobs, support our health care system, and provide coverage and financial security for hardworking Tennesseans.

We are gathering to tell our legislators that it's time for the legislature to do its job by bringing Tennesseans' tax dollars back home and providing health coverage to the 280,000 Tennesseans in the coverage gap. ([Click here to learn more.](#))

When?

Tuesday, January 9th
11am-1pm CST

Where?

Meet at the Tennessee Justice Center (211 7th Avenue North, Suite 100/Nashville, TN 37219) at 11am, or the TN Capitol Rotunda by 11:45am. (Please [RSVP](#) and/or check the [Facebook event](#) to be notified of any last minute changes!)

RSVP

Step 1: [Please RSVP for the event here!](#)

Step 2: [Please also say that you're going on our Facebook event, and share our event with 10 of your friends!](#)

GET YOUR T-SHIRT

Is your old InsureTN t-shirt worn out? Want to be part of the healthcare voter movement? We've got the perfect piece for you!

[Click here to get your Tennessee Healthcare Voter t-shirt!](#)



- * \$20: We'll ship the shirt to you
- * \$10: Pick up the shirt on Jan 9th at the gathering at the TN Capitol.
- * \$60: Bring 9 people to the event and you'll get 4 shirt's FOR FREE.
- * \$100: Bring 20 people to the event and you'll get 10 shirts FOR FREE.

[Buy your shirt today!](#)

We need your help in getting as many people to join us next Tuesday as possible. [RSVP now to tell us that you will join us next Tuesday, and please invite your friends and colleagues!](#)

As a reminder, the Tennessee Justice Center also helps with:

1. Enrollment onto TennCare and CoverKids
2. Service Issues
3. Redetermination Issues

If you ever encounter anyone who is having trouble getting health insurance or getting health services, please call TJC: (615) 255-0331.

If there is any information you would like us to share on your behalf, including events and resources, please reply to this email.

Sincerely,

Kinika Young

Director of Children's Health
kyoung@tnjustice.org



STAY CONNECTED:



kyoung@tnjustice.org | 615-255-0331 | <https://www.tnjustice.org/>