



THE CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

August recess is coming to a close. There has been incremental progress on the federal healthcare front but still a whole lot of uncertainty. We are still hopeful that there will be bipartisan success in stabilizing of the individual marketplace that will begin to bring down premiums and out-of-pocket costs, as well as a clean reauthorization of CHIP before the September 30 deadline.

On the state level, we have made significant progress on TennCare redetermination and are preparing to begin talks about how to close the coverage gap in Tennessee.

What can you do?

1. Check out our resources in this newsletter to get updates on our work and the work of other state advocates;
2. Learn more about the importance of Medicaid and CHIP for children;
3. Add your voice to the conversation through sharing healthcare stories, writing letters to the editor, op-eds, letters from your group, and/or in-person meetings or public events

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ICYMI

- [The Comptroller's office has launched an investigation into TennCare's redetermination issues. This was precipitated by the article in the Murfreesboro Daily News Journal that quoted our staff attorney, Christopher Coleman, at length.](#)
- [County level fact sheets from Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth \(TCCY\) that compile the Kids COUNT data along 34 indicators of well-being.](#)
- TCCY also released a report entitled "[2018 Proposed Federal Budget Impact on Children in Tennessee](#)" that outlines the effects of the budget created by Budget Chair Rep. Diane Black (R-TN) on Tennessee's children.
- We applaud Family and Children's Services, particularly Sharon Barker, and the Martha O'Bryan Center for continuing to enroll Tennesseans in Marketplace plans despite uncertainty of funding and administrative support. [Their efforts were covered by the New York Times.](#)
- We are currently looking for stories about parents who are unable to work because their child has severe health care needs or parents who have had difficulty finding affordable childcare that in turn prevents them from holding steady employment. **Please reply to this email if you know anyone in these situations.** Below are our most recent stories we have shared:



[Young man previously on TennCare is now in the coverage gap](#)



[Foster mother of 3 children with special health care needs has faced](#)



[Mother shares heartbreaking and uplifting story of her son's health battle](#)

- [Last volume of the Children's Champion](#). You can find the rest of them at: tnjustice.org/childrens-health/.

THE MORE YOU KNOW...

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), known in Tennessee as CoverKids, is up for reauthorization by September 30, 2017.

CHIP stands on the shoulders of Medicaid. We cannot talk about one program without mentioning the other. We would not have 96% of children insured in Tennessee but for these two programs working in tandem.

- [This report by the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission \(MACPAC\) is a complete overview of the CHIP program nationally and how Tennessee compares to other states as far as cost-sharing, eligibility, federal matching rates and enrollment numbers](#). It also shows the great amount of flexibility that CHIP affords to states. This report is one of the resources that congressional staff will be considering ahead of reauthorization hearings.
- To see Medicaid/CHIP coverage by school district in Tennessee, [follow this link and click the arrow by Tennessee](#). It will download an Excel spreadsheet with the data.

With the risks to Medicaid funding proving perennial, we must remember why it's so important. [Georgetown Center for Children and Families' report "Medicaid is a Smart Investment in Children"](#) outlines 4 great reasons:

1. Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women and children improves health throughout their lives, from prenatal development to adolescence to adulthood.
2. Medicaid eligibility leads to improvements in educational outcomes at the elementary, high school and college levels.
3. Childhood Medicaid protects the whole family from financial hardship by decreasing the probability of debt and bankruptcy for families.
4. Childhood Medicaid produces economic benefits in adulthood, including increased employment, higher tax payments, and returns on public investment in Medicaid.

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal level:

- We look forward to seeing what happens with Sen. Alexander's hearings about market stabilization set to begin the first week of September. **We want to make sure that Medicaid cuts are off the table as potential offsets to pay for market stabilization.**
- We are closely watching the **budget process to look for entitlement program cuts to fund tax cuts to wealthy individuals and corporations.** The Senate Budget Committee, which Senator Bob Corker sits on, is currently drafting its own budget legislation.
- **CHIP reauthorization needs to be clean and maintain the 23% bump and the maintenance of effort (MOE) provision.**
- The Affordable Care Act is still the law of the land. **844-644-5443 is the number to give to anybody who wants assistance signing up for the ACA, or to start the process for TennCare,** since new TennCare enrollees have to go through the Marketplace first.

State level:

- Be vigilant about requests to amend Tennessee's Medicaid waiver to add **problematic provisions like work requirements and cost sharing.**
- **Be watchful of TennCare's redetermination efforts.** Although there is an investigation, there could still be issues.

JOIN US

Upcoming projects and events:

- **TJC Student Ambassador Project coming soon!** We are working on an exciting new project for high school students who have benefited from Medicaid or CHIP and want to make a difference in their community. Stay tuned for details. Dennisse will be the point of contact for this project. Her email is dcalle@tnjustice.org.
- **We will also be releasing a policy brief on CHIP reauthorization in the next week.** It will be shared on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). "Like" or "follow" us to see it!
- **Tennessee Health Care Campaign's Annual Conference: "Health Care is Complicated: What's Next?" - Sept. 16.** Visit <http://www.thcc2.org/conference/> to register and for more information.

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

Sincerely,

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STAY CONNECTED:



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