

Children's Champion

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With the start of football season, we are playing both offense and defense on issues concerning children's health right now.

On offense, we launched two new educational videos for our Insure Our Kids campaign that you can view (and share!) below. One video is for parents and the other is for providers. Additionally, we published a policy brief on infant and maternal mortality in Tennessee that received press coverage across the state.

On defense, we're focusing on two policies. First we are challenging the misguided policies regarding the proposed rule change to public charge that has already had detrimental effects in Tennessee. We are also opposing the proposal of new work requirements on parents and caregivers on Medicaid. You can read more about these proposals and what you can do below.

QUICK LINKS

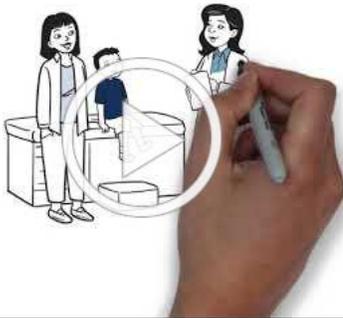
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INSURE OUR KIDS UPDATES



Insure Our Kids Video for Parents -
[Share on Facebook](#)



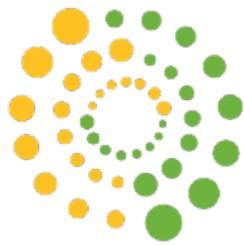
Insure Our Kids Video for Providers -
[Share on Facebook](#)

Thank you to everyone who came out to the Insure Our Kids Watch Party to view the videos, including Insure Our Kids partners American Heart Association, Tennessee Disability Coalition, Tennessee Health Care Campaign, Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee, and Family and Children's Service.

Special thanks to Lentz Public Health Center for providing the venue and to the Vanderbilt Community Health Improvement Team for funding the videos.

We are grateful to [the Nashville PRIDE](#) and Channel 5 for covering the event.

We would like to welcome Common Table Health Alliance as an Insure Our Kids partner! Common Table Health Alliance is our lead partner in Memphis and co-convened our highly attended [Insure Our Kids Memphis Training](#) in July.



COMMON TABLE™
Health Alliance

Please "like" and "follow" the Insure Our Kids [Facebook page](#).

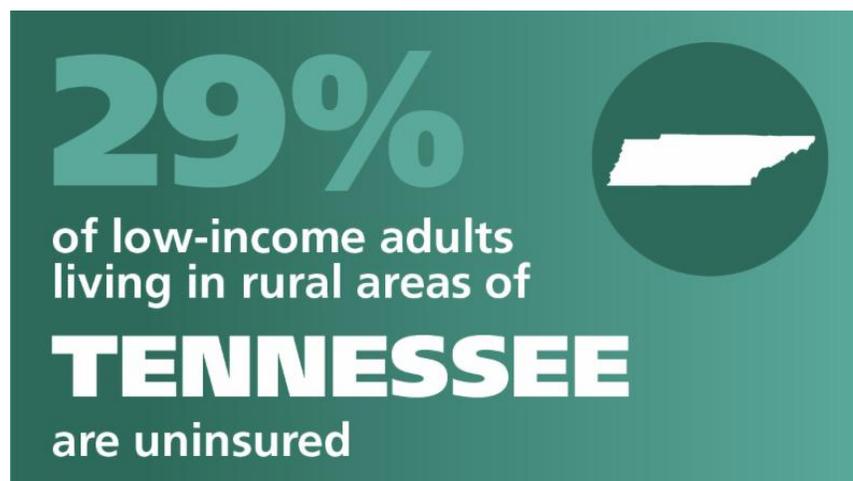


If you need help applying for TennCare and CoverKids, call **1-844-644-5443**.

If you have already applied and been denied, call the Tennessee Justice Center at **1-877-608-1009** to get free help to file an appeal.

Don't forget to check out insureourkids.org for more information.

ICYMI



- **Rural health:** New report shows low-income adults in rural areas of Tennessee have the most to gain in the Medicaid expansion debate. "We need to make sure that, no matter where they live, Tennesseans have access to the care they need to get and stay healthy," said Michele

Johnson, Executive Director of the Tennessee Justice Center. "This report shows that expanding Medicaid will make a difference, not just to families and individuals, but also by keeping rural hospitals open and providing critical access to care." [Read the full report here.](#)

- **Young parents:** *Opening Doors for Young Parents*, the latest KIDSCOUNT policy report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.
 - The fifty-state report reveals that, at 13 percent (75,000 young adult parents), Tennessee is above the national average (10 percent) of youth ages 18 to 24 who are also parents.
 - The report highlights the following statewide trends and areas of concern:
 - 99,000 children in Tennessee have young parents (defined as ages 18-24).
 - 73% of children of young parents in Tennessee live in low-income families, which is above the national average.
 - Only 12% of young parents have completed an associate degree or higher.
 - 9% of Tennessee's young parents are people of color, facing challenges exacerbated by discrimination and systemic inequities with their children standing to suffer the most.
- **TJC at trial:** A class-action lawsuit that we filed alongside the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and the National Health Law Program (NHeLP) went to trial this week. "It has been four years since we filed the lawsuit, and thousands of Tennesseans who are eligible for TennCare continue to have their rights to a prompt decision violated," said Sam Brooke, deputy legal director for the SPLC. "By requiring people who qualify for Medicaid under state and federal law to jump through a series of unnecessary bureaucratic hoops, the state is depriving thousands of low-income citizens of timely access to essential medical care. We are asking the court to require Tennessee to finally fix this broken system." [You can learn more about the lawsuit here.](#)

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Infant and Maternal Mortality



New Report Details Why Tennessee Moms and Babies Are Dying at Significantly High Rates

The United States is an outlier among developed nations with dismal rates of infant and maternal mortality. Tennessee has some of the worst - and continually worsening - rates in the United States, ranking [33rd in maternal mortality](#) and [38th in infant mortality](#). TJC authored [a policy brief](#) that outlines potential causes and solutions for the disheartening prevalence of women and babies dying in the state. The key causes are: the opioid epidemic, lack of Medicaid expansion, and poor health behaviors and pre-conception health. The TJC's findings prove that improving access to health care would significantly help mitigate the contributing factors to infant and maternal mortality rates.

Kristen Rector, President and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee (PCAT), said: "This paper points out many of the challenges and disparities that contribute to infant and maternal mortality in our country, one of the most developed countries in the world, along with potential strategies for improvement. The United States should follow the lead of other developed countries that have prioritized the health of women and infants. By ensuring equitable access to healthcare and evidence-based interventions before, during, and after pregnancy, we can achieve positive outcomes for more mothers and newborns."

Anna Walton, Health Policy Associate of the Tennessee Justice Center (TJC) and co-author of the policy brief, said: "When I saw Tennessee's dismal outcomes in the 2018 America's Health Rankings [Health of Women and Children report](#), I immediately wanted to learn why moms and babies were dying at higher and higher rates in Tennessee. The evidence is

clear: poor maternal health leads to poor birth outcomes like low-birth weight, preterm birth and death. We should do all we can to provide access to healthcare and other supports to women before and after pregnancy to make a lifelong impact that will affect multiple generations."

We are grateful for the in-depth coverage of the policy brief across the state:

- [Study urges Medicaid expansion to combat, maternal, infant mortality](#) - Chattanooga Times Free Press
- [Event to commemorate child, pregnancy loss; Tennessee's infant death rate remains high](#) - Knoxville News-Sentinel
- [Report: Tennessee has 8th highest infant mortality rate in nation](#) - Johnson City Press
- [Report: Tennessee has 8th highest infant mortality rate in nation](#) - Fox 17

We would be remiss not to mention the research and policy initiatives focused on reducing the racial disparities in infant and maternal mortality. African American babies are more than [twice as likely](#) to die before their first birthday than white babies in America, and [statistics](#) show that the risk of dying from pregnancy- and childbirth-related complications is three to four times higher for African American women than any other group of women in the United States. (Source: [African American Women Mayors Champion Policies to Improve Maternal Infant Health Outcomes](#), Candace Webb of Georgetown Center for Children and Families)

LOOKING FORWARD



Federal level:

The [proposed rule change regarding public charge](#) was officially published in the Federal Register today, which starts the 60-day comment period. For updates and more information on how to submit comments, [please join TJC and TIRRC's public charge email list](#). More [in-depth analysis](#) of the rule.

State level:

TennCare has released [a public notice](#) and a [draft waiver amendment](#) of its work requirements proposal.

Here are the top 3 things that you need to know about TennCare's proposal that would take away health coverage from people who don't work a set number of hours a month:

- **This proposal is a solution in search of a problem.** The TN legislature passed a bill this past spring which prompted TennCare to submit this work requirements proposal. According to the official fiscal note for the bill, the proposal is targeted at a mere 2.8% of people on TennCare. Administering the proposal will require the state to spend more money to cover fewer people. The General Assembly anticipates taking funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to administer the work requirements.
- **This proposal will create an expensive bureaucratic mess that will jeopardize coverage for hundreds of thousands of people.** Although the elaborate bureaucratic apparatus the proposal creates is targeted at only 2.8% of TennCare enrollees, it will affect hundreds of thousands of people who will be subject to burdensome reporting requirements. Though eligible, they will be at risk of losing their coverage because of bureaucratic errors and the state's well-documented difficulties reliably processing eligibility information.
- **Your voice matters. We need to submit as many public comments to the Division of TennCare as possible by October 26! [Click here for comment guidance and template comment for your use.](#)**

JOIN US

INSURE OUR KIDS ENROLLMENT TRAINING



**THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 8
11 AM CT**



[REGISTER HERE!](#)

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:



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