

# Children's Champion

November 14, 2018 • Vol. 24 • Tennessee Justice Center

We urge you to submit comments against the proposed changes to public charge that would radically affect immigrant families across the country. The deadline to submit comments is December 10th.

The proposed rule would create an income test that will make it harder for most immigrant families to stay or be reunited in America. Under the draft proposal, if someone receives Medicaid, nutrition benefits, or other aid for which they are eligible, they may be denied green cards or a change of immigration status. Children perform better in school, have fewer health problems and brighter futures when they have access to nutrition and health care services.

For guidance on how to draft a comment, we have created [a comment guidance resource with template comments](#). If you would like us to review your comment before submission, please email it to Anna Walton at [awalton@tnjustice.org](mailto:awalton@tnjustice.org).

Attend our [webinar this Thursday at 3 pm-4 pm CT](#) to learn how you can help stop the harmful public charge proposed rule.

## QUICK LINKS

[About Us](#) | [Give Now](#) | [Get Involved](#) | [Staff](#)



# INSURE OUR KIDS UPDATES

Thanks to the Tennessee Bar Association for sharing our last Insure Our Kids webinar in their email newsletter.

There is one last opportunity to attend the **Insure Our Kids enrollment and eligibility webinar on Thursday, December 13 3 pm - 4 pm CT.**

[Register here!](#)

## INSURE OUR KIDS ENROLLMENT TRAINING



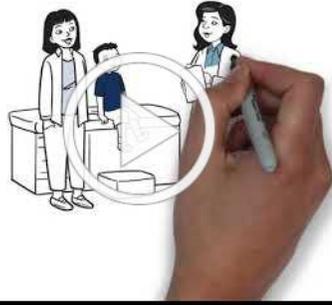
THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER 13  
3 PM CT



## ICYMI



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



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

- **Student Ambassador Conference:** Last week we welcomed 6 new student ambassadors to our office to learn the basics of our healthcare system and how they can get involved in Tennessee to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare. The ambassadors learned the power of storytelling in advocacy and got hands-on experience with mock interviews and submitting letters to the editor. We look forward to working with them on their advocacy projects throughout the year.
- **McKenzie General Hospital closure:** "If Tennessee had expanded Medicaid, I am convinced that McKenzie Regional Hospital would not have closed. No more rural hospitals should close for lack of funding that Medicaid expansion would provide." - [Mayor Jill Holland, McKenzie, TN in an op-ed in the Commercial Appeal](#)

## THE MORE YOU KNOW

### Katie Beckett Waiver



### What is the Katie Beckett Waiver?

Tennessee is the only state in the nation that has not adopted a simple policy to

help some children with disabilities get services they need at home rather than in an institution. In Tennessee, children who require an institutional level of care are excluded from Medicaid (TennCare) if their parent's income is over the limit when they are at home, but Medicaid will cover these same children if they are institutionalized. In effect, the state is forcing families into a terrible choice -- face financial ruin to care for children at home, or institutionalize them so that Medicaid pays for the care, often at a higher cost than getting care at home.

The program, called a Katie Beckett Waiver or the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) option, would allow children who need institutional level of care to qualify based on their own incomes, regardless of whether they are at home or in an institution. This is vital because many of these children require home health and other services that aren't covered by their private health insurance.

Families in Tennessee are speaking out in the media about how they would benefit from Tennessee having a Katie Beckett or TEFRA option.

### **Why don't we have an option for these families?**

In short, policymakers have not chosen to adopt Katie Beckett or TEFRA. One issue is that there is a misunderstanding that our Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES program is an option that addresses the issues these families face.

The children that we work with and those in the news stories below would not be helped by the ECF CHOICES program. ECF CHOICES is not designed to help children with complex medical needs.

According to the TennCare Bureau's application to start the ECF CHOICES program, "The service definitions were developed in consultation with experts from the Office of Disability Employment Policy to create a roadmap that will **help individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities achieve their employment goals.**"

ECF CHOICES strictly limits the number of enrollees, prioritizing individuals meeting specific criteria like needing supports to maintain employment, transitioning from school to employment, etc. To find out more about who might qualify for ECF CHOICES, read on [here](#).

**All categories of potential enrollees are outside of the scope of a Katie Beckett waiver.** The ECF CHOICES program does not serve potential Katie Beckett recipients and is not intended for them. It is an employment support program for transition age youth and adults. It is the only open home and community-based Long Term Care Program in Tennessee, which is its own laudable purpose, but it is not a program designed for children with complex health needs.

### **In the news**

- [Gray family advocating for Katie Beckett waiver in Tennessee](#) - Johnson City Press

- [Family faces desperate options after TennCare denies coverage for disabled daughter](#) - Fox 17
- [Middle Tenn. family could lose daughter's TennCare coverage due to income levels](#) - Fox 17

### What you can do

- Share our [Katie Beckett waiver fact sheet](#) and [blog post](#).
- If you or someone you know would benefit from Tennessee having an option like Katie Beckett, please reply to this email.

## LOOKING FORWARD

### Federal level:

Medicaid expansion was a [big winner](#) in last week's election. 3 states - Idaho, Nebraska and Utah - [passed Medicaid expansion](#) as ballot initiatives. with the election of a new governor, Maine will finally be able to enact their Medicaid expansion that they passed on a ballot initiative last year, and also because of a new governor, Kansas will have another opportunity to pass expansion since their attempt was thwarted by their governor's veto.

Momentum is building across the country with the vast majority of states opting for expansion and the preliminary data showing economic and health outcome improvements. If you support Medicaid expansion in Tennessee, please [sign our petition](#) to bring home or federal tax dollars next legislative session.

### State level:

[Two more hospitals are closing](#) before the end of the year. That brings us to 11 hospital closings since 2010, more per capita than any other state. Studies show that states that did not expand Medicaid are 6 times more likely to have hospital closures than those that did expand.

## JOIN US

As mentioned above, we have [a webinar Thursday 11/15 3 pm-4 pm CT](#) on the **harmful effects of public charge** and how to submit comments to combat the new proposed rule.

We also have [a webinar Thursday 11/15 2 pm-3 pm CT](#), led by Cassaundra Lockridge, TJC's SNAP Access Coordinator, along with a SNAP Coordinator from Second Harvest of Middle TN, on **SNAP and the application process for individuals and organizations in Middle Tennessee.**

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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.

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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](mailto:kyoung@tnjustice.org)



**STAY CONNECTED:**



[kyoung@tnjustice.org](mailto:kyoung@tnjustice.org) | 615-255-0331 | <https://www.tnjustice.org/>