

Children's Champion

March 13, 2019

•Vol. 28•

Tennessee Justice Center

After a gloomy February, the sun has emerged and we are thinking of all the possible "seeds" we can plant this spring to make sure that children in Tennessee can grow and thrive.

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's Children's Advocacy Days this week filled us with renewed hope and plenty of great ideas from all our fellow children's advocates across the state.

As we dream of what can be, we are still very worried that we are losing ground on the children's coverage gains made in the last decade. If you know a child or family who has lost health insurance, they can call Tennessee Justice Center at 1-844-478-KIDS (5437) for free assistance.

We have also seen a pattern of CoverKids application process delays for pregnant women.

Don't miss our webinar tomorrow, Thursday, March 14th at 11:00 AM about the delays. [Register here!](#)

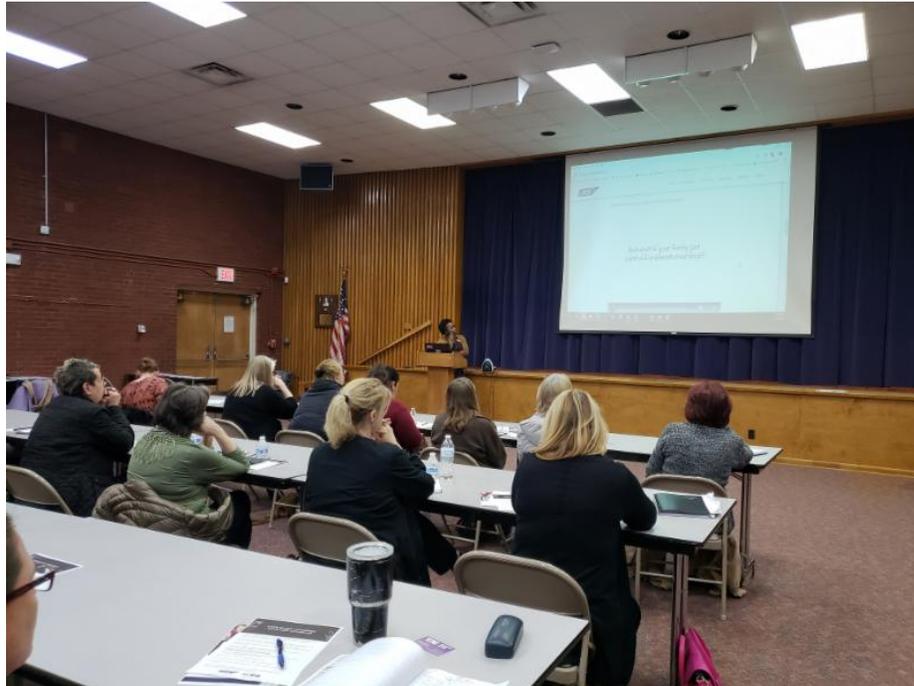
In this webinar, we will instruct you on best practices for helping pregnant women apply for CoverKids so that their applications may be processed as quickly as possible. We will also advise you on how and when to refer pregnant patients to the Tennessee Justice Center for help with filing an appeal.

Together we can keep our state moving in the right direction!

QUICK LINKS



INSURE OUR KIDS UPDATES



Thank you to everyone who came to our Insure Our Kids training in Knoxville on Wednesday, February 13! Thank to Knoxville Family Justice Center for providing the meeting space.

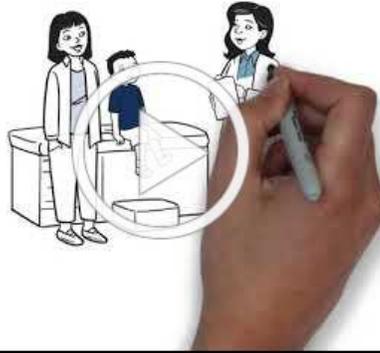
Please continue to share our updated Insure Our Kids videos!



Your children may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance.



[Insure Our Kids video for parents](#)



[Insure Our Kids video for providers](#)

If you need help applying for TennCare and CoverKids, call **1-844-478-KIDS (5437)**.

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.

A photograph of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt, laughing heartily with his mouth wide open.

ICYMI

Cumberland River Hospital in Celina, TN, closed its doors on March 1.



[View the video](#) our Creative Director Alex Kent made about the

The Tennessee Department of Health released their [Review of 2017 Maternal Deaths](#). We commend their key recommendations for 2019, especially the following:

- The State should expand resources and patient access to treatment options for substance and mental health disorders both during pregnancy and for the year following pregnancy.
- Women and their friends and families should receive education to identify new or emerging symptoms that require early attention before, during and after pregnancy and should be encouraged to seek care early should symptoms arise. This includes discussions with their healthcare providers on chronic conditions in advance of becoming pregnant.

We would also like to add that the resource and access issues that these recommendations address are directly related to the women's health insurance status. Many women do not have access to health insurance before pregnancy and/or face delays or difficulties getting enrolled in health insurance. Please revisit [our policy brief](#) that recommends Medicaid expansion as a policy solution to the maternal and infant mortality crisis in our state.

A Katie Beckett bill is moving forward in the state legislature. The [powerful stories](#) from parents of children with complex healthcare needs led legislators to file and support HB 0498/SB 0476. Although we don't have the final bill language, we are hopeful that the legislature wants to help families get the best care possible for their children. We want to thank the sponsors of the bill, particularly Rep. Sam Whitson. Please encourage your lawmakers to support it. [Here](#) is more information about the Katie Beckett program.

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Children's Disenrollment

Since November 2016, we have seen [over 100,000 children](#) lose TennCare. We have also seen [CoverKids enrollment](#) drop, too.

The way our system works, almost every child should be eligible for health insurance. Enrollment in public programs is down dramatically, and correspondingly, [Tennessee saw one of the highest increases in uninsured children in the country](#). Tennessee is moving backwards in the long-standing trend of increasing kids' coverage.

If you know a family who has lost TennCare or CoverKids coverage for their child, they can call Tennessee Justice Center at 1-844-478-KIDS (5437) for free assistance.

Ask your legislator, "Why are we losing ground with covering Tennessee's children?"

[Please share our flyer](#) about children's disenrollment so that together, we can learn more about what is causing this devastating trend and help children get re-enrolled in coverage.

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal level:

National opposition to work reporting requirements for low-income parents continues to escalate. Tennessee is one of several non-expansion states that petitioned the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) to approve their request to impose work reporting requirements on low-income parents. [Over 50 national organizations wrote a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services](#) (which includes CMS) about the harm to children and families of these requirements in non-expansion states.

State level:

The Tennessee legislature is moving quickly to pass a [Medicaid block grant bill](#) (HB 1280/SB 1480). You can find more information about Medicaid block grants on [our fact sheet](#) and you can find a recording of our press call with national experts [here](#).

A couple notable quotes from the call:

"This proposal could end up cutting the safety net for some of the most vulnerable families, children and seniors in Tennessee. By putting a cap on Federal funds for TennCare, state officials will be choosing who can get health care, and who can't." - Patrick Willard, Families USA

"Every state has a Medicaid program. No state has a Medicaid block grant. There is a reason. Without the guarantee of a federal share, states would not have the resources to meet the needs of their most vulnerable populations. They would have to pit one group against another: 'devil take the hindmost.'" - Andy Schneider, Georgetown University Center for Children and Families

You can also find more information of how Medicaid block grants are particularly harmful to older adults and people who need long-term supports and services [here](#).

JOIN US

Join us on tomorrow, Thursday, March 14th at 11:00 AM for a webinar on CoverKids application processing delays for pregnant women.

In this webinar, we will instruct you on best practices for helping pregnant women apply for CoverKids so that their applications may be processed as quickly as possible. We will also advise you on how and when to refer pregnant patients to the Tennessee Justice Center for help with filing an appeal.

We will have time at the end of the webinar for questions, so bring your specific or general case questions.

[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
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STAY CONNECTED:



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