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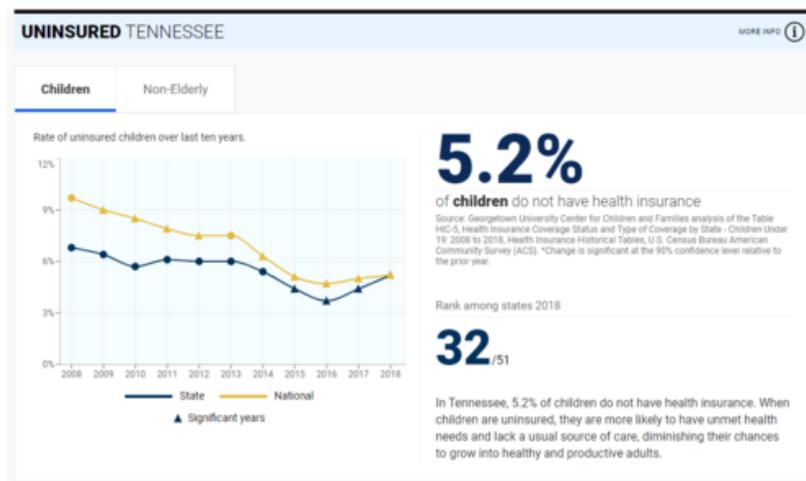
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Children's Champion

•November 14, 2019•
Tennessee Justice Center

ICYMI

- The Georgetown University Center for Children and Families released their annual report on the state of children's coverage that we shared in [last month's Children's Champion](#). In a [new blog post](#), they discuss the importance of expanding Medicaid immediately in order to fill the gap in children's healthcare coverage. Many states are seeing an increase in bipartisan agreement for Medicaid expansion because the benefits are becoming too difficult to ignore. Unfortunately, over half of all children who are uninsured live in the South and, coincidentally, the South is the main region that continues to largely refuse Medicaid expansion. The rate of uninsured children rose three times as fast from 2016 to 2018 in states that did not expand Medicaid versus states that did. The solution is actually quite simple. When Medicaid is expanded and more adults start applying for coverage, they learn that their children are eligible for coverage too. Additionally, the non-expansion states can accept federal funding to expand affordable healthcare coverage through Medicaid.
- Georgetown University Center for Children and Families also released updated maps and data on Medicaid coverage for children in every congressional district in 2018. These can be found [here](#) and on their Children's Health Care Report Card [site](#).



- The Tennessean [reported](#) that Tennessee has stockpiled \$1 billion dollars in unspent funds under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Child Care and Development Fund. State leaders are now scrambling to develop a plan to put this money to good use to help lift families out of poverty. [See TJC's site for more information.](#)

THE MORE YOU KNOW

TennCare announces they hope to expand postpartum coverage from 60 days to one year

In the United States, more women die each year as a result of pregnancy or pregnancy-related complications than any other developed country. In 2017, 52 women died in Tennessee within a year of giving birth. Officials at TennCare have announced a new plan that would expand coverage to up to 6,500 new moms across the state. Currently, new moms lose their TennCare coverage 60 days after giving birth. However, the majority of these postpartum deaths are happening between 43 days and one year.

Kinika Young, our Director of Children's Health, [said](#), "Tennessee is currently ranked 41st in maternal mortality, moving down 8 spots from the previous year. We are the 48th state to consider providing a pathway to postpartum care beyond 60 days. Fifty-two preventable deaths of brand new mothers are devastating and are sadly a part of a bigger issue of women dying who are in the Medicaid coverage gap...We are glad to see policymakers acknowledge that their decisions have life-and-death consequences. We hope they will extend this recognition to other policy decisions, like Medicaid expansion, immediately."

To learn more about how Medicaid expansion can prevent maternal deaths and better address substance use disorders and racial disparities, read "[Tennessee Mothers Deserve More than a Pilot Program.](#)"

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal updates

- **ACA Open Enrollment** - The ACA open enrollment for Marketplace plans runs from November 1st to December 15th. Get access to the care you need by clicking [here](#) and signing up.

State updates

- **Medicaid block grant proposal** - The state comment period on the block grant has ended! Back in May, the state legislature passed a bill directing Governor Lee to submit a proposal to the federal government which would ask to convert the state's current Medicaid program (TennCare) into a block grant. On September 17th, Governor Lee released his proposal, commencing the mandatory 30-day comment period. There were public hearings in Nashville, Jackson, and Knoxville and due to public outcry, two more hearings were held in Memphis and Chattanooga. People turned out in droves and voiced overwhelming opposition. All of the public hearings were well attended and 1,655 comments were made opposing the harmful block grant! Comments were submitted by a diverse group of stakeholders across the state – people who are on TennCare, people with a disability and/or serious medical needs, healthcare professionals, students, and advocates.

What's next? The state is supposed to consider the comments and address them in the proposal before submitting it to the federal government by November 20th. Thereafter, the federal government will provide another 30-day comment period. Comments submitted during the federal comment period must be considered before the proposal is approved. This process is important, as comments were instrumental to a court's decision to invalidate the approval of the work reporting requirements proposal in other states. Once the federal government approves the block grant proposal, the state legislature will vote on whether to accept the final version of the block grant waiver. Visit www.tnjustice.org/blockgrant for everything you need to know about the Medicaid block grant proposal.



JOIN US

Organizing 101 for the Medicaid Block Grant Federal Comment Period

Webinar

Thursday, December 5

6 pm CT

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Learn how to engage your community to stop the harmful block grant proposal in its tracks! Maybe you want to engage your child's PTA? Maybe your neighborhood? Maybe your school? Maybe your retirement community? Maybe your faith community? There are so many groups that can get involved to fight the Medicaid block grant proposal by submitting comments during the

federal comment period. Learn from advocates in the TJC community who work to defend healthcare rights in their area. No experience necessary!

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
Tennessee Justice Center

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