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Children's Champion

• May 13, 2020 •
Tennessee Justice Center

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Health Equity

TJC's mission to ensure that our laws, policies and programs reflect and honor the value and potential of every human being, regardless of income, age, ability or race, is rooted in the goals of health equity. For over 24 years, TJC has worked to elevate the needs of marginalized groups – including, low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities – and make Tennessee's policies more just and compassionate. This work must center health equity as its touchstone and confront racism as a systemic barrier to the equitable allocation of resources among different groups.

Health equity is achieved when every person, regardless of race, income, education, gender or other demographics, has access to what they need to be as healthy as possible. If there were equitable access to resources, including health care, housing, transportation and food, then a person's zip code would not be a predictor of their life expectancy. The goal of health equity is to eliminate health disparities, such as higher rates of infant and maternal mortality, higher rates of chronic conditions and lower life expectancy, that are prevalent for people of color and are not due to genetic predispositions.

We have a brand new webpage at TJC to highlight our work to advance equity: <https://www.tjjustice.org/health-equity/>.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Health Equity training last month. We are grateful to Dr. Freida Outlaw for presenting and sharing her expertise. You

can view the slides and a recording [here](#).

Check out and play around with our data visualizations of Tennessee county-level data. The page also has resources about rural health, racial disparities and maternal health.

INSURE OUR KIDS UPDATE

Good news! Tennessee received approval for its CHIP disaster relief state plan amendment (SPA). The approved provisions are to waive requirements related to timely processing of applications and renewals, waive cost-sharing for all services related to COVID-19 testing and treatment, and delay acting on changes in circumstances affecting eligibility, other than changes related to residency, death, voluntary termination of coverage, erroneous eligibility determinations, and becoming eligible for Medicaid. Similar provisions were already in effect for TennCare, which paused terminations as of March 18.

Here is the link to the [approval](#). Also, here's the link to [FAQs](#) which clarify that during this public health emergency states are excused from timely processing requirements for applications and renewals, but they need to document the reason for the delay in the individual's case record.

It is good news that children and pregnant women who are already enrolled on CoverKids do not have to worry about losing their coverage or paying out-of-pocket costs for COVID-19 services during this time. However, it is concerning that decisions on new applications may be delayed at a time when people are losing their jobs (and employer-sponsored health insurance) and becoming eligible for these programs.

We're here to help. Please share [our enrollment flyer](#) with anyone who may need help figuring out if they qualify for TennCare or CoverKids. TJC also created this [webpage](#) to help people find assistance with health care and nutrition. Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center is also offering enrollment assistance via telephone and here's their [flyer](#).

Another Insure Our Kids partner organization, Family & Children's Service, is also offering assistance by phone with TennCare, CoverKids and Marketplace enrollment. Assistance is available statewide and is offered in several languages. Check out their flyer in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) and share with your networks.

As a reminder, we updated the Insure Our Kids [toolkit](#), and the animated videos are still available. We've hit over 63,000 views on YouTube!

STUDENT AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Aisha Sajo



We are so grateful for our Student Ambassadors who were working to plan an in-person event focused on teen mental health. Aisha was the secretary on the project and led internal communications with the group organizing the event.

Aisha said:

“Healthcare is a social justice issue because many people are not granted the basic right to receive medical treatment. Healthcare is an important necessity for many people....The reason I want to advocate for mental health is because as a student, I see firsthand how difficult it can be for young adolescents my age especially when they are still trying to find their identity.”

You can learn more about TJC's Student Ambassador Program [here](#).

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal updates

- [HEROES Act](#) - The latest COVID-19 bill increases funding for Medicaid, re-opens the ACA Marketplaces and invests in contact tracing. It also takes positive steps in protecting people from debt collection. It is heartening to also see increases in protective equipment and more robust safety guidance for essential workers – many of who are people of color and people with existing health issues, working at low wages. There is more to do to protect our neighbors and secure their livelihood. Additional funding for Medicaid is needed to support states in closing the coverage gap; deeper investment in ACA subsidies is needed to help people access coverage; and congressional action to halt the public charge rules that stoke fear throughout the country is necessary.
 - Call, email, and [tweet at](#) your [Members of Congress](#) to ask them to support the HEROES Act and include additional provisions to increase access to health insurance.

State updates

- **Legislative session to come back from recess on June 1.** The legislature will be back in session shortly. The legislators will be taking meetings by appointment only.

JOIN US

TennCare, CoverKids, and SNAP: TJC's Road Map to Getting What You Need

**Friday, May 15
12 PM CT**

[**REGISTER HERE**](#)

Join us as we go over TennCare, CoverKids, SNAP (formerly food stamps) and Covid-19 relief. We will talk about who can get it, how to apply and how TJC can help. This is your chance to get REAL information and advice from the experts. Bring your questions and tell a friend. This webinar will also be live-streamed on our Facebook page.

COVID-19 & the Nutrition Safety Net Webinar #3

**Thursday, May 28
1:00 PM CT**

[**REGISTER HERE**](#)

Join the TJC Nutrition Team on Thursday, May 28 at 1:00 pm CT for the third webinar in our series - **COVID-19 and the Nutrition Safety Net in Tennessee**. SNAP (food stamps), WIC and the child nutrition programs continue to adapt and change in response to the pandemic. Tune in to hear more about recent changes, advocacy opportunities through our Feed TN campaign and how you can help Tennesseans who face hunger.

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
Senior Director of Health Policy and Advocacy
Tennessee Justice Center

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Stay connected:



Tennessee Justice Center
211 7th Ave N
Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37219
United States

outreach@tnjustice.org | 615-255-0331 | <https://www.tnjustice.org>

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