THE MORE YOU KNOW

Health disparities in Tennessee

Tennessee ranks near the bottom (50th being worst) among all states in several key measures of health, including:

➤ 45th in cancer deaths, cardiovascular deaths, and diabetes
➤ 43rd in premature death
➤ 44th in access to quality health care and preventive services

With Tennesseans suffering such serious health problems, the legislature’s decision to deny access to federally funded Medicaid is especially destructive. Tennessee is one of a dwindling minority of states that still blocks its citizens access to care. The legislature’s action hurts all of us. It also perpetuates and deepens historical injustices, by widening existing health disparities based on race, poverty, disability, or region of the state.

Read and download a fact sheet about health disparities, including child poverty, in Tennessee

ICYMI

• Emergency Cash Assistance for families - DHS has extended the deadline to apply for the Emergency Cash Assistance program until August 29th. More details about the program and how you can apply here.
• Pandemic EBT - The deadline to apply for Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) has been extended again to July 27. Families of children in grades Pre-K to 12 who receive free or reduced-price school meals or attend a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools may now receive P-EBT benefits to help alleviate missed school meals during March, April, and May when children were not in school because of COVID-19.
  - Not on SNAP but qualify for free or reduced-price school meals?
    - Apply for P-EBT online here.
    - Must have a valid email address and phone number to create an account.
    - P-EBT information in Spanish available here.
    - Spanish P-EBT application video guide available here.
  - Already receive SNAP or Families First/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits?
    - No application is necessary.
    - The first P-EBT money was added to SNAP/Families First EBT cards in June.
  - P-EBT Questions? Call the TDHS hotline - at 1-833-496-0661 and select option 3.
  - Please share this information with families who might be eligible for P-EBT.
  - If you have problems connecting with someone or are unable to access the application contact Signe Anderson at sanderson@tnjustice.org.
  - TJC will continue to share updates about P-EBT. Sign-up here for P-EBT updates.
  - Our Director of Nutrition Advocacy, Signe Anderson, wrote an op-ed in the Tennessean highlighting the administrative barriers to children accessing the benefits that they need.

• New state data - The State of Babies Yearbook: 2020 released by ZERO TO THREE shows that the state in the U.S. where a baby is born impacts their chance for a strong start in life. Check out all the new Tennessee-specific data and how we stack up to other states.

• Latest press releases
  - Our response to the Trump administration’s rollback of vital discrimination protections
  - Our response to the plaintiffs’ briefs filed in the ACA Repeal case, California v. Texas
  - TJC welcomes Mika Moser as Chief Operating Officer
  - New report shows 122,000 Tennesseans have lost health coverage due to job loss

• New blog posts - TJC interns Tamia Esmon and Shery Girgis authored two blog posts, one post about how Medicaid expansion could prevent maltreatment of children, and the other post about the role of Medicaid in rural communities.

• Health equity - Check out our new data visualizations on our health equity webpage that show county-level data on unemployment trends and how they intersect with child uninsurance and race in Tennessee.

---

Welcome Heavyn Jennings as King Child Health Fellow
Heavyn was born in a small town in the Mississippi Delta and raised in Saint Louis, Missouri where she first began her work in child advocacy through volunteering at a halfway house. Her experience there led her to pursue a BA in psychology at Princeton University. During her time at Princeton, she took classes around child development and current issues impeding upon child health in the United States.

Heavyn believes healthcare is a necessity and health insurance should not be a barrier to receiving care. Parents should not have to worry about whether they can pay before taking their child to the hospital. She hopes to pursue a BSN and become a neonatal nurse in the future to continue providing necessary support and aid to those in need.

In her free time, Heavyn enjoys learning new hairstyles and exploring new areas. She looks forward to experiencing all that Nashville has to offer.

You can reach Heavyn at hjennings@tnjustice.org.

---

**STUDENT AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT**

*Carlette B. Kinga*
We are so grateful for our Student Ambassadors who were working to plan an in-person event focused on teen mental health before the pandemic. Carlette was the co-lead of the Mental Health awareness project.

Carlette said:

"It's more important than ever that people stand up, start the conversation, and advocate for others who may not have the ability or courage. Accessible health is a right, not a privilege. It's disgraceful that anyone is denied access to healthcare, in the US, I personally have family and friends that suffer from an assortment of mental illnesses and I had to do a lot of research on it and how to deal with it, yet there weren't many sources out there. So if there could be a place where people can get all that information and learn more about it, that is what I want to provide."

You can learn more about TJC's Student Ambassador Program here.

---

**LOOKING FORWARD**

**Federal updates**

- The economic crash resulting from the pandemic led an estimated 5.4 million workers to become uninsured — by far the largest coverage loss in U.S. history. From February to May 2020, [122,000 Tennesseans lost health coverage due to job loss](https://www.tennesseehospital.org/medicaid) — bringing our total adult uninsured population to 751,000 or 19% of the adults in our state. This is the 10th highest rate of uninsurance in the nation.

Unless Congress acts swiftly, these coverage losses will take a terrible toll on families' health and economic security. Comprehensive health insurance protects against crushing medical bills and provides access to care for both COVID-19 and other medical conditions. Regardless of the pandemic, patients still have cancer and heart disease, babies are still being born, and children still need comprehensive coverage to grow up healthy and strong.

Aside from a modest increase in federal funding for Medicaid, no COVID-19 Congressional package signed into law thus far has helped struggling families keep their comprehensive health insurance.

We are calling on Senator Alexander and all members of Congress to step up and ensure there is a path to comprehensive, affordable health coverage for the rising number of workers who are uninsured in the next Congressional relief package.

[Email Sen. Alexander NOW](https://www.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewMessage/e9717ba1-cac6-4a11-9b05-00155d03bda0)

**State updates**

- Families receiving services through the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) waivers will soon be managed by managed care organizations (MCOs). This will mean changes to the kinds and amount of supports and services provided to waiver participants. Likely, waiver services will be changed to be more like the services provided by the TennCare Employment and Community First CHOICES program. This could pose real problems for individuals with the most significant needs, challenges, and disabilities. We are working alongside the Tennessee Disability Coalition to make sure families receiving DIDD services (Comprehensive, State-wide, and Self Determination) understand how the proposed changes would affect them.

- We don't know yet when DIDD’s listening session will be, but right now, you can:
  - Attend a webinar hosted by TJC about the plan on July 27th at 11:30am CT/ 12:30pm ET. [Register here](https://www.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewMessage/e9717ba1-cac6-4a11-9b05-00155d03bda0).
• Call or email Sara Scott, Family Voices of TN Advocate at 423-405-7645 and familyvoices@indisability.org to learn more about the plan and/or share your story
• Call or write your state Senator and Representative. Find their contact information at capitol.tn.gov.

JOIN US

Tea Time with TJC

Join us at Tea Time with TJC

THURS 3 PM CT/ 4PM ET

REGISTER HERE

Hop on a Zoom conversation with us and other advocates to take action, find ways to amplify our collective power, and get creative about how we can make a difference. No prior knowledge necessary-everyone is welcome! We'll pick a weekly action, but we encourage everyone to make it their own or to bring more ideas to the group. If you can't make the call, you can still take action and tell us about it with the hashtag #TeaTimeTJC!

This week, we'll be emailing officials to protect and defend the ACA which is a safety net for the LGBTQIA community!

Correction: In last month’s Children’s Champion, we referenced a report that said 52 women suffered preventable deaths after giving birth in 2019. The report was released in 2019, but the preventable deaths reported on occurred in 2017.

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

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  
Update your subscriptions

{{if IsSentByTargetedEmail}}(Unsubscribe is not supported in previews)Unsubscribe{{end}}

{{Disclaimer}}