MORE YOU KNOW

TennCare to integrate CoverKids with TennCare Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)

Starting January 1, 2021, all three TennCare managed care organizations (MCOs) will manage benefits for children and pregnant women who are enrolled in CoverKids.

The current TennCare MCOs are Amerigroup, BlueCare Tennessee, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan. The CoverKids program is currently administered by BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, and BlueCare is the only MCO option. This change is meant to help families have more consistency if their child moves between TennCare and CoverKids due to income changes or if children in the same family qualify for both TennCare and CoverKids and would prefer to have the same MCO.
CoverKids enrollees should be on the lookout for information about their newly assigned MCO and how to switch if they wish to do so.

Read BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee's FAQs about the integration to learn more.

ICYMI

• **Katie Beckett Waiver Update** - Many of you advocated to make a Katie Beckett Program a reality for Tennessee. The Program is for children under age 18 with disabilities and/or complex medical needs who are not Medicaid eligible because of their parents’ income or assets. On September 20, 2019 TennCare submitted a demonstration amendment to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to establish the Katie Beckett Program. CMS has not yet approved the amendment. As a result, the Program cannot begin. Your continued advocacy can make a difference!
  - **What You Can Do for Katie Beckett Kids**
    - Send emails to Tennessee’s Senators Lamar Alexander and Marsha Blackburn and ask for their help to urge CMS to approve the amendment without further delay.
    - Reach out to your local media to talk about how you have had to seek help from Tennessee’s Senators because CMS has not approved the amendment. If you need help with sharing your story, contact Sara Scott at the Tennessee Disability Coalition.

• **Healthy Nashville Leadership Council (HNLC) Community Stakeholder Survey** - Please complete this survey to help HNLC develop, expand, and adapt strategies and action steps for Priority Issues in the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) by gauging current program and organizational efforts in Davidson County. This survey is anonymous and should take no more than 10 minutes. Thank you for your contribution to our ongoing work to improve community health. **Complete the survey.**

• **ALICE COVID survey** - As a member of the Tennessee Afterschool Network, we are partnering with United Ways of Tennessee on a COVID-19 Impact Survey to better understand the impact of the pandemic on households in Tennessee. The survey includes questions about childcare, afterschool, access to food, access to internet, healthcare, housing, employment challenges, mental health concerns, and beyond. This information will help us identify trends and local needs, and enable afterschool programs, United Ways, and other nonprofits to provide targeted resources and support for families during this difficult time. Please also promote the survey by sharing with your network. **Complete the survey.**

• **DIDD and TennCare Integration Update** - Tennessee has announced plans to integrate all Medicaid services for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. So far, information regarding the integration plan is vague, and there are a lot of unanswered questions. We know that
some of the most vulnerable Tennesseans receive care through the programs that the State is now trying to change. We need assurances that these changes will value the lives of people enrolled and will not reduce the amount of care that people depend on for their health and wellbeing. Our state leaders should know that the voices and concerns of people with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities matter and must be considered as the State moves forward with this integration plan! Email your legislators and let them know we need a fair and transparent integration plan that truly prioritizes the needs of individuals enrolled in the impacted programs.

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal updates

- A rising number of Tennesseans have no health insurance due to unemployment and a financial crisis. Tennessee also has one of the lowest rates of enrollment increase in public health insurance programs, meaning the safety net is not catching many of the newly uninsured. In the meantime, providers and hospitals aren't seeing as many patients, causing further damage to healthcare access and local economies. 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 or gain their comprehensive health insurance. If Congress doesn't pass another COVID relief package this week, there won't be one for the foreseeable future. Along with relief for the uninsured, the package must also provide food and rental assistance for struggling families, relief to states and schools and an increase of the federal government's share of Medicaid payments. Federal policymakers need to put politics aside and pass a relief package that is strong enough to get us through this crisis.

Email our Senators!

State updates

- Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Program - The P-EBT program provides money to families or guardians with children who receive free or reduced-price school meals, or who attend a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school that offers free school meals to all students. USDA has approved a plan submitted by DHS to get benefits to the children who did not get them through the application process. Here are the two main points the plan covered:

1. Provide P-EBT cards for the remaining 200,000 children that were missed by the application process. The cards will be delivered to school districts to be distributed. Schools will determine how they will get the P-EBT cards to families. Note this still isn't direct mail issuance.

2. Extend P-EBT to cover meals lost in August and September. Cards will be mailed directly to children who qualify in schools that are doing remote learning or have been closed for 5 consecutive
days or more due to COVID-19. Schools are required to get information to DHS in order for children to receive the P-EBT funds.

Do you have questions about Pandemic EBT? Call the TDHS P-EBT hotline at 1-833-496-0661.

Have you been denied P-EBT but believe you are still eligible? Submit an appeal with DHS. The appeal is available in Arabic, Somali, and Spanish.

Contact us if you have problems connecting with someone or are unable to access the application at nutrition@tnjustice.org.

TJC will send updates on any breaking news regarding P-EBT as we learn about them. Sign-up here to be the first to know.

JOIN US

Advocacy 101 Online Training

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 11 AM CT

- How to talk to legislators
- How to generate media interest in your issues
- & MORE!

Advocacy 101 Online Training

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

11 AM CT/12 PM ET

REGISTER HERE

In case you missed the Tennessee Justice Center's August Advocacy 101 training with our co-host, The Equity Alliance, we are offering another training...
for beginner advocates. You will learn how to get your issues in front of news media, how to speak to legislators and have a chance to ask questions as time permits.

CoverKids 411: Making Up for Lost Ground

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

11 AM CT/12 PM ET

REGISTER HERE

Join panelists Kinika Young, TJC's Senior Director of Health Policy and Advocacy, and Tricia Brooks, Research Professor at Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy’s Center for Children and Families (CCF); MACPAC member; former chief executive officer of New Hampshire Healthy Kids for a discussion on the declining enrollment for Tennessee's CoverKids program and how to reverse the trend.

Southerners for Medicaid Expansion: Digital Vigil

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1
TJC is proudly partnering with other Southern states who have not expanded to fight for healthcare, racial justice and the future of the South. We are in the shared struggle to take care of our families, neighbors and communities.

**Sign the Southerners for Medicaid Expansion petition** to show solidarity with our neighbors. Let's get as many signatures as we can before October 1st!

You can learn more about Southerners for Medicaid Expansion at [southerners4medex.org](http://southerners4medex.org).

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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