MORE YOU KNOW

The impact of COVID-19 on Children’s Health in Tennessee

Recent reports from the Annie Casey Foundation and Tennessee’s Commission on Children and Youth show child well-being has been negatively impacted by the pandemic in multiple segments of their lives such as education, health-care, and economic stability.

The national report, Kids, Families and COVID-19: Pandemic Pain Points and a Roadmap for Recovery, details how the pandemic has negatively impacted the stability of families across the United States as a whole and suggests some policy reforms to improve child well-being nationwide. Children’s health is one of many topics of the report. Some distressing findings were:

- 1 in 5 adults in household with children felt down, depressed or hopeless and 1 in 3 felt nervous, anxious or on edge. Widespread access
to mental health needs to be available. While the American School Counselor Association recommends a student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1, New Hampshire, Vermont and Wyoming are the only states with have ratios that low.

- **14% of adults in households with children did not have health insurance in October 2020.** This value was 21% at the beginning of the pandemic. Additionally, **a little over a third of people with children in the household (34%)** delayed getting medical care in the previous month. We know that parents are more likely to take their children to the doctor if they also have health insurance.

The Tennessee-specific report, *The State of The Child 2020: COVID-19 Edition*, notes Tennessee’s response to the pandemic, what has been done to alleviate the burden on families, and state-specific data on health, finances, and education. Key health-related findings include

- As of November 26, 2020, there have been just under **65,000 cases of COVID-19** among children and youth up to age 20 in Tennessee. This was 18.3 percent of total cases. Wyoming is the only state with a higher percentage of child cases.

- At the beginning of the pandemic, 1 in 5 adults in households with children lacked health insurance. This dropped to about 1 in 6 during the summer. Prior to the pandemic there was only about 1 in 10 parents without health insurance.

- As of October, **about a third (27%)** of adults in households with children delayed getting medical care due to the pandemic and **almost a quarter (23%)** missed getting medical care entirely.

These reports highlight the need for better coverage for children and their families. The national report includes key policy reforms such as the need for policy makers to put racial and ethnic equity first and prioritize the physical and mental health of all children. In order to improve upon child well-being. Tennessee needs to consider these recommendations and make the necessary policy changes.

---

**ICYMI**

- **White House Office on Children and Youth: Sign-On Letter** - Over the past few months, 350 organizations and leaders (including TJC) have expressed support for a White House Office on Children and Youth. This office is critical to elevate the needs of children, youth and their families, and build back better by addressing COVID-19, health equity, and poverty. Out of this crisis must come leadership to secure the future for the next generation.

  - Establishing a White House Office on Children and Youth would bring sustained attention to research and policy recommendations, enhance alignment and coordination of federal programs and investments, and ultimately set our country on a trajectory of wellbeing, prosperity and thriving for the future. You can read more at [www.nemours.org/WHOffice4Kids](http://www.nemours.org/WHOffice4Kids).
• **Jeopardizing a Sound Investment Report**: Last week, The Commonwealth Fund released the **Jeopardizing a Sound Investment: Why Short-Term Cuts to Medicaid Coverage During Pregnancy and Childhood Could Result in Long-Term Harm** report. Medicaid coverage for children and pregnant women was aligned with better health, greater educational attainment, and better financial outcomes during adulthood. If states were to make cuts to their Medicaid programs as a result of COVID-19, there could be consequences in the long-term. [Check out the full report](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992).

![Medicaid's Long-Term Impact on Health](image)

- **Recent News**
  - [Break cycles of childhood trauma to address chronic social ills](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992) | **Opinion**
  - [Tennessee Voices: A conversation with Michele Johnson](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992)
  - [Medicaid Expansion Increased Preventive Care for Pregnant and Postpartum Women, New Study Finds – Center For Children and Families](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992)

- **TANF Surplus**
  - [A year later, Tennessee’s massive reserve for needy families is even larger, with no spending plan in place](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992)
  - [Tennessee TANF surplus shows state can’t or won’t manage the program well](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992) | **Editorial** *(Please reply to this email if you are willing to submit a Letter to the Editor in response to this editorial)*

- **New Story Blog**: Check out the [Irvin Family’s story](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992) and learn about the positive impact Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act have had on their lives.

- **Katie Beckett 101 Webinar**: This past week Katie Ann Twiggs from TJC’s Independence Team, and Sara Scott, Advocate at Family Voices of Tennessee went over the requirements for the new Katie Beckett Program including the application process and benefits provided to children in each part. [View the recording](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992).

- **New Blog Post**: Check out this blog post, [Newborns Need Coverage Starting on Day One](https://email.everyaction.com/EmailMessage/PreviewRenderedContent?renderedContentId=af427381-455f-eb11-a607-00155d43c992) written by King Child Health Fellow Heavyn.
Federal updates

- **CMS Interim Final Rule** - The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released an interim final rule October 28th. The rule reinterprets the maintenance of effort (MOE) provision in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The confusing policies outlined in the reinterpretation give states more control over eligibility and benefit determinations during the public health emergency. The new interpretation gives states the power to terminate coverage for individuals.
who were not “validly enrolled” in Medicaid, reclassify coverage into three tiers of varying coverage levels, and eliminate optional Medicaid benefits for adults. **States can do all these things and still receive the 6.2% increase in Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) under the FFCRA.** Not only does this contradict previous guidance, it is confusing and will result in the disenrollment and loss of critical services for many people in state Medicaid programs. While this interim final rule went into effect immediately, advocates have until January 4, 2021 to submit comments.

Submit a comment and tell the government not to cut Medicaid services and coverage during the pandemic.

- **COVID-19 Relief Package Updates** - Congress must not adjourn at the end of this year without providing urgently needed relief. A group of bipartisan senators and representatives released a new six-page COVID relief proposal on December 9. The summary includes important measures, such as an extension of the expiring pandemic unemployment program, a 15% SNAP increase for four months, additional rental assistance, a one-month housing eviction moratorium, and fiscal relief for state and local governments. The package is far from what we all had hoped would pass but it is an important next step for the country. Current threats include Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's proposal to remove legal liability COVID protection for businesses and aid to state, local, and tribal governments from the bipartisan proposal. Another threat is the latest White House proposal which is $916 billion and seeks to cut the $180 billion unemployment insurance extension proposal to $40 billion. Speaker Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Schumer have issued a statement firmly rejecting this White House proposal. Congress has until December 18th to reach a bipartisan agreement on government funding for the rest of the fiscal year.

Ask Congress to pass COVID-19 relief to address poverty

State updates

**Katie Beckett Program**

Tennessee has started accepting applications for the Katie Beckett Program. 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. Families can able apply for the program through TennCare Connect.

- Part A will provide up to 300 children with significant severe disabilities full TennCare benefits and up to $15,000 in home and community- based services.
- Part B will provide up to 2,700 children with severe disabilities a stipend of up to $10,000 to help cover services not covered by their insurance.
Application and enrollment assistance is available. If you need help applying, call the Tennessee Justice Center toll free at 1-877-608-1009.

P-EBT

The deadline for schools to distribute Round One P-EBT (March-May) is coming to an end

DHS will allow extensions to schools that need more time to distribute P-EBT cards to parents. Schools can also mail cards directly to families.

Round Two P-EBT cards for August and September were mailed to families

Not all families are eligible for round two P-EBT. Children who participate in remote learning or attend a school that has closed due to COVID-19 are eligible, if they participate in free or reduced price meals or attend a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school.

To learn more details about Round 1 and 2 P-EBT, read more here.

P-EBT Extended to September 2021 – benefits will be available for families who qualify: USDA released new guidance on P-EBT.

If you have questions about P-EBT, email TJC at nutrition@tnjustice.org

JOIN US

Tennessee Justice Center and University of Tennessee College of Nursing present 2021 Healthcare Advocacy Series

January 2021

Learn more and Register Here

Kick off 2021 with fresh advocacy skills! Build your advocacy knowledge, learn about the healthcare challenges across Tennessee, and participate in a media engagement workshop. This series is geared toward healthcare providers and those interested in tackling healthcare challenges across Tennessee. Each session is free and open to all. Feel free to sign up for the entire series or
individual sessions. Sessions include: Advocacy 101, Tennessee Healthcare Landscape in 2021, and Media Engagement.

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

(Unsubscribing is not supported in previews)Unsubscribe