



Issue XV ·

Covering kids & families Wisconsin

January 2007

Happy New Year! We look forward to another productive year working to reduce the number of uninsured children in Wisconsin.

The Suspense of Grant Awards

After a year of planning and research, two months of writing and editing, three months of review, it all came down to a nail-biting 3 ½ hour meeting. The process of submitting grant proposals is one that CKF staff has become accustomed to in the pursuit of continued growth and sustainability. But it's hard to prepare for the drama they endured on the evening of December 13 at the Wisconsin Partnership Fund's Oversight and Advisory Committee's public meeting.

CKF's proposal was among the two dozen finalists for an Implementation grant discussed that evening. Approximately thirteen would get funding, but which ones? ABC for Health, The Department of Health and Family Services, and ten others were named. At last— lucky number 13 – Covering Kids and Families was announced.

“Coordinating Partnerships to Improve Access to Public Health Coverage,” is CKF's three-year, \$446,000 proposal to more directly link the National School Lunch and Family Medicaid enrollment processes in Wisconsin. Should the grant be determined eligible for Federal Medicaid administrative match, the grant will ultimately provide a total of more than \$800,000 in new outreach funds for CKF.

The project is intended to decrease the negative health impacts for at-risk children (low-income, minorities, rural residents) by significantly improving access to the state's Family Medicaid programs among those who are eligible. It aims to institutionalize a process for enrollment through the free and reduced price school lunch program. The project brings the resources and experience of a statewide coalition, two key state agencies (DHFS and DPI), and three strong units of the UW System (UW-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health, UW-Madison, and UW-Extension) together with select school districts to better identify and reach children in need of public health insurance.

The excitement may not end there: CKF submitted another three-year, \$450,000 grant application this fall and eagerly awaits the result of the Medical College of Wisconsin's Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program, even if it means sweating through another dramatic evening!

Changes at CKF

New funding means new opportunities and new responsibilities for CKF. New staff will be hired and current staff – Michael Jacob, Allison Espeseth, and Sara Ishado – will be reassigned to accommodate the needs of the WPF grant and the on-going sustainability of CKF. Though the existing funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will end this summer, CKF will continue to provide outreach and organizational support to its 65+ member organizations. Also, the exciting possibility of additional funding through other grants and federal match offers opportunities to implement new projects in the year ahead. CKF members will have the opportunity to provide their input on defining these new projects through the CKF list serve and at our spring meeting.

Upcoming Events

- CKF Spring Coalition Meeting, Madison, March 14, 2007, 9:00-11:45 a.m. The agenda is being developed now; if you have topics you would like addressed, send your ideas to info@ckfwi.org. Information will be available soon at www.ckfwi.org.
- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families 2007 Lobby Day, March 14, 12:30-4:00 p.m. CKF members are encouraged to get involved and educate the legislature about public health insurance and other issues. For more information, contact Vicky Selkove at (608) 284-0580 ext 326, vselkove@wccf.org.

2006 Fall Coalition Meeting

CKF used a new tool called Wisline Web to broadcast the fall coalition meeting across the state. CKF members logged in from their office to view presentations and discuss Medicaid enrollment trends, which allowed for savings in time and money normally spent on travel. Participants, however, requested that we continue to gather face-to-face once per year, in the spring. If you were unable to participate in the meeting, you can view the recorded version and the presentations from the conference at www.ckfwi.org/StatewideMeeting_Fall.cfm.



Citizenship Verification: An unfair reality

By: Kathy Kaelin & Andy Heidt, CKF-WI co-chairs



With the incoming citizenship and identity verification requirements, we predicted eligible families would be deterred by the new barrier. Recent Wisconsin DHFS enrollment analyses confirm that between August and October 2006, 8799 individuals were terminated or denied coverage solely as a result of verification requirements. The majority failed to produce identity documentation and most were new applicants.

Two pieces of news give relief. In December, Congress made some “corrections” and exempted children receiving adoption or foster care services and persons receiving Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Income benefits from the requirements. And Wisconsin’s DHFS says it’s exploring options to curtail further negative effects with activities such as improving communication with consumers.

As the number of low-income uninsureds in Wisconsin rise, we are concerned these marginal changes don’t go far enough to assuage the impact and reverse the trends. Help us plan our 2007 strategy for acting on this and other Medicaid/BadgerCare policy issues by participating in the **CKF Policy Retreat on January 24th**, 1:30pm to 4pm. Thanks to Wisconsin Council on Children and Family’s generosity, we will meet in their new space on 555 W. Washington Avenue in Madison. Contact Allison if you would like to attend: aehales@wisc.edu. You can pair our retreat with the WCCF’s 125th anniversary event at Monona Terrace (www.wccf.org/event_125_year_celebration.php) that evening.

2006 Back to School Campaign



CKF partners and friends helped make the 2006 Back to School Campaign (BTS) an immense success. The August/September annual campaign seeks to draw the connection between the Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program and BadgerCare since both programs have the same income requirements. As parents apply for FRPL at the beginning of the school year, they could also apply for BadgerCare. The campaign has grown to include four parts: statewide materials distribution, news releases, press conferences, and public service announcement.

CKF coordinated the distribution of outreach materials in 24 different counties through on-going outreach activities, including health fairs, school supply give-aways, county fairs, immunization clinics, HeadStart home visits, and school mailings. More than 38,000 materials with the 877-KIDS-NOW number were distributed statewide.

CKF partners in 53 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties took the lead locally to distribute a press release about the importance of health insurance. CKF developed a template press release and posted county-specific data to its website, which CKF partners then used to localize and distribute in their area. A BTS story appeared in at least 19 different newspapers.

The official start of the campaign began with two press conferences. The first press conference, at Children’s Health Education Center, in Milwaukee featured First Lady Jessica Doyle, Milwaukee Senator Lena Taylor, State Health Officer Sheri Johnson, the Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association, the Milwaukee Health Department, Covering Kids and Families, Children’s Health Education Center, the Milwaukee Brewers, and two families who are BadgerCare recipients. The event was preceded by a story in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that ran statewide on the Associated Press wire and was covered by Milwaukee’s FOX 6 and CBS 58, and Wisconsin Public Radio.



The second press conference, at Wright Middle School, in Madison, featured Michael Jacob from CKF and Arlene Silveira from the Madison Metropolitan School Board. The event was covered by Madison’s WISC TV3 and WKOW TV27, and the Wisconsin Radio Network.

The campaign was complimented by the creation and use of public service announcements (PSA). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation sponsored \$300,000 worth of airtime for a PSA in the Milwaukee area urging families to call the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Hotline. The MCH Hotline received 1605 calls about health insurance during the campaign.



A Madison marketing firm, AdHouse Creative, provided services pro-bono to produce a PSA featuring kids from Madison. The PSA has been completed and can be viewed at www.imcovered.org. If you are interested in having the PSA run in your area, please contact info@ckfwi.org.

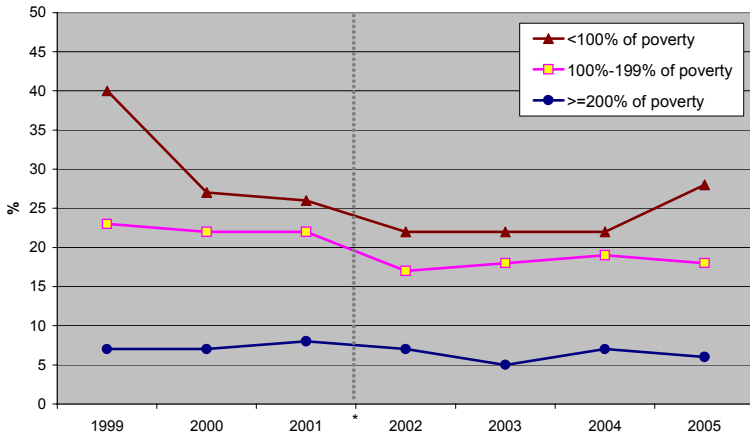
CKF coordinates the Back to School Campaign from July to September. Please contact info@ckfwi.org if you would like to be involved in 2007.

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2005 Family Health Survey

The proportion of uninsured residents has dropped in Wisconsin since the implementation of BadgerCare in 1999. Children, blacks, and those with lower incomes experienced the largest reductions in uninsurance rates, while whites, Latinos, older residents, and those with incomes above 200% of the Federal Poverty Line have largely held steady at pre-BadgerCare rates. Additionally, disparities between groups persist: low-income and minorities in Wisconsin remain much more likely to go without health insurance than those with higher incomes and whites. This is also true for adults, despite all age groups seeing increases in Medicaid coverage.

**Percent Uninsured At Any Time During Year
By Poverty Level (1999-2005) ***

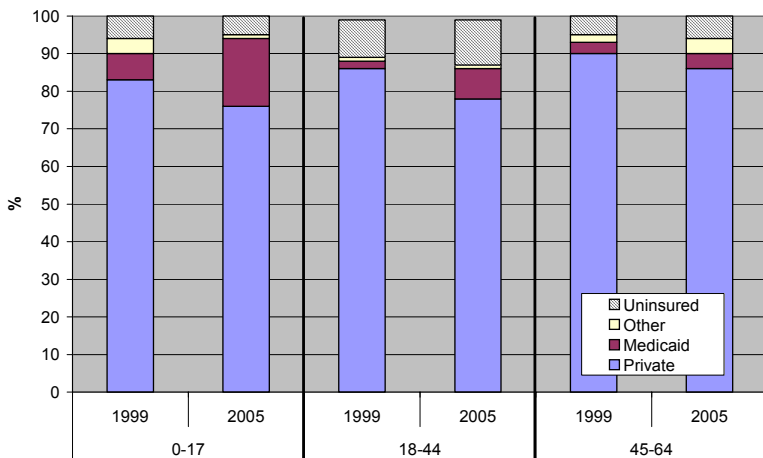


**Percentage of Children and Non-Elderly Adults
Uninsured At Any Time During Year (1999-2005) ***



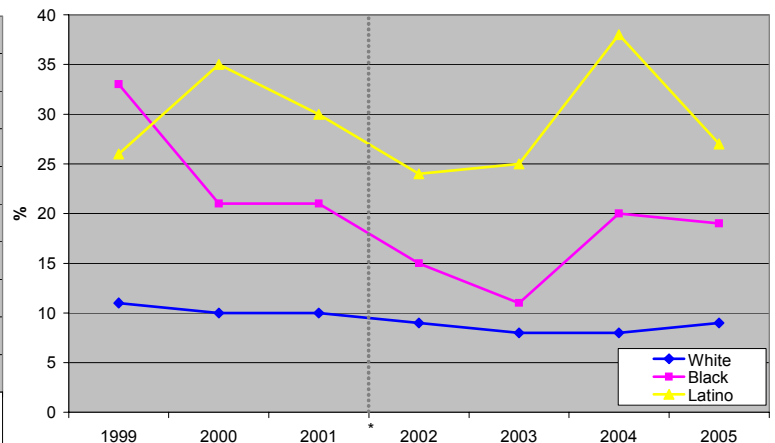
The introduction of BadgerCare in 1999 extended health care coverage to children and families with income up to 185% of the Federal Poverty level. Not surprisingly, since that time, uninsurance rates among children and those with lower incomes has dropped. But in 2005 an estimated 562,000 people in Wisconsin were still uninsured at some point during the previous year, over half of whom were within or near the income eligibility guidelines for public coverage.

**Percentage of Children and Non-Elderly Adults
By Current Insurance Type (1999 and 2005) ***



Private coverage among all non-elderly age groups has dropped dramatically since 1999. Newly uninsured children are finding coverage through Family Medicaid programs like BadgerCare, as are many adults. Uninsurance rates among adults, however, have also increased as employer-sponsored programs become less accessible.

**Percent Uninsured At Any Time During Year
by Race/Ethnicity (1999-2005) ***



Disparities in health care coverage between whites, blacks and Latinos remain stubbornly large in Wisconsin, with blacks twice as likely to be uninsured as whites and Latinos more than two and half times more likely to be uninsured. It's possible the gaps will further grow in the wake of documentation requirements added in 2006.

* These charts use data from the 1999-2005 *Wisconsin Health Insurance Coverage* reports, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/family/healthsurvey.htm>. All of the survey questions about health insurance were revised in 2002, so comparisons to earlier years should be made with caution.

- ✓ What's Inside:
- ✓ Grant Award
- ✓ Back to School Recap
- ✓ Citizenship Verification
- ✓ Family Health Survey
- ✓ Summary
- ✓ Spring Coalition Meeting
- And more...

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Save the Date

Covering Kids & Families

Spring Coalition Meeting

March 14, 2007

9:00 - 11:45 a.m.

Madison

Details and the latest information will be available at www.ckfwi.org.