



Issue XVI.

Covering Kids & Families Wisconsin

April 2007

2007 Federal Poverty Level



You and your children may be able to get help with health care through BadgerCare, Medical Assistance, or Healthy Start.
Find out more inside and apply today!
Produced by CKF-WI, Fall 2005

The 2007 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) was updated in February. A memo was released by the Department of Health and Family Services, and can be found online at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/ops-memos/2007/pdf/07-10.pdf>. The memo lists the new income eligibility amounts for the different Family Medicaid Programs. According to the memo, CARES began using the new FPL to accommodate “any applications run on or after February 1 and any ongoing cases run with the February date will have eligibility determined using the 2007 FPL limits.” In addition, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families released a document, http://www.wccf.org/pdf/fedpovtables_2007.pdf, which lists the new Federal Poverty Level by annual, monthly, and weekly amounts.

Covering Kids & Families-Wisconsin (CKF-WI) will update its Medicaid county brochure – titled “Low cost or free healthcare coverage for kids and families” - to reflect the new FPL. Also, CKF-WI will print a large number of the brochures and have them available on a first come, first served basis. Please send any requests for the printed brochure by email info@ckfwi.org, or by phone (608) 261-1455.

New Analysis from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

100,000 Wisconsin kids – 7% of all kids in Wisconsin or one in every 14 kids in the state – have no health insurance, which is below the national average. In March, Robert Wood Johnson released this and additional analysis about uninsured children in Wisconsin and the nation. Since 1997, employers who offer health insurance to parents with modest incomes have fallen three times as fast as offers to parents who earn more money. Two out of every three uninsured kids in WI (64%) live with adults who earn modest incomes, calculated at less than \$40,000 or less for a family of four. Many of these children would be eligible for BadgerCare.

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation said, “For the last decade, SCHIP has provided a much-needed safety net for our nation's kids, especially as there has been a decline in the number of children in low-income families covered by employer-sponsored health insurance. Parents realize that providing health insurance for their children is becoming more costly and those who earn modest wages are doubly squeezed. They are less likely to be offered insurance on the job, and less able to afford to purchase it on their own.”

Additional Wisconsin information mentioned:

- In Wisconsin, more than three out of four uninsured children (76 percent) live with someone who works full-time.
- The most recent available data show about 55,000 people a year are covered by SCHIP in Wisconsin.
- In Wisconsin, 54 percent of uninsured kids under the age of five live in these low-income households, as do 63 percent of 6-12 year-old uninsured children and 70 percent of uninsured children aged 13-18.

The report was prepared by analysts at the State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC), located at the University of Minnesota. The report analyzes data from the U.S. Census Bureau (1998-2006 Current Population Surveys), U.S. Centers for Medicare

Update on Health Care Reform Proposals

Nationally, Senators John D. Rockefeller and Olympia Snowe announced a bi-partisan Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP, the federal program under which BadgerCare operates) reauthorization bill that will continue coverage for those enrolled and expand to cover more children. Locally, in Wisconsin, the race for health care coverage reform has begun with some sweeping ideas.

You are probably at least minimally aware of, if not overwhelmed by, the array of proposals that have been entered into Wisconsin's apparent health coverage reform competition. While we don't have the aid of a mnemonic device to remember the names, we can direct you to a helpful web page prepared by the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health listing proposal names, summaries, and links: www.wiawh.org/policycenter/policytracker/hcreform.aspx. Also listed are dates and locations for upcoming panels occurring throughout the state.

Most eyes are focused on the Governor's BadgerCare Plus proposal – a program that would consolidate and expand the state's existing Family Medicaid programs. If approved, implementation could begin for most components in January 2008. Before that happens, budget estimates must go through the Joint Finance Committee and the State Assembly and Senate. At the same time, the state is also seeking federal approval for the changes, which, like the budget process, has an uncertain and unspecified timeline.

One group organizing around health care coverage reform is the "Big Tent" Coalition. Wisconsin Citizen Action has gathered 31 diverse organizations into a coalition to advocate for comprehensive health care reform in Wisconsin. The coalition, which has organized itself around principles for reform rather than any of the numerous plans offered by legislators and organizations, introduced itself March 8 through media events in Madison, La Crosse and Green Bay.

While CKF-WI remains focused on its core mission of ensuring children and families know about and get enrolled in the public health programs for which they are eligible, the work of policy makers, organizations and coalitions on broader reform is welcome and needed.



Co-chair corner: Covering Kids and Families Update

By: Andy Heidt, CKF-WI co-chair

This is an exciting time for our organization! While our original funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ends this July we are thrilled to have received **two Implementation Grants**, one from the Wisconsin Partnership Fund for a Healthy Future and the other from the Medical College of Wisconsin.

With the new requirements of the citizenship and identity verification pushing up the numbers of uninsured in Wisconsin, we must be more vigilant and effective as advocates in order to maximize coverage for all people in the state. The Governor's BadgerCare Plus proposal is a definite positive step, but this co-chair will not be satisfied until all people in Wisconsin have health insurance coverage. Even with BadgerCare Plus, we must still work hard to ensure that low-income families – those most at-risk – can actually enroll in the coverage for which they are eligible and receive valuable access to care.

We will have success in this area but we need to continue to grow our organization to meet our goal of covering Wisconsin's residents. Recently, Sara Finger and Laura Kerecman were elected to CKF-WI's steering committee. We welcome your participation by joining the CKF-WI Policy or Outreach Committees, which meet monthly via toll-free conference call and drive the work of the Coalition.

We look forward to our continued work on behalf of uninsured children and families. Please feel free to contact me at Heidt@co.dane.wi.us or CKF-WI's other co-chair, Kathy Kaelin at KKaelin@Automated-Health.com.

Another Grant Awarded! Combined Grants = \$1.6 Million

Last month, CKF-WI was awarded a \$450,000, 3-year implementation grant from the Medical College of Wisconsin's Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program. This grant follows the January implementation award of \$446,000 provided by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health from *The Wisconsin Partnership Program*. With both grants likely eligible for federal matching funds for Medicaid outreach, it will bring the total amount to CKF-WI to \$1.6 million over three years.

Needless to say, CKF-WI is still spinning from the previous grant and is overjoyed by the second. Both projects aim to reduce health disparities for at-risk children and families by significantly improving access to the state's Family Medicaid programs among those who are eligible. The major component will be to design and systematize a process that connects eligibility for the free and reduced price lunch program with Family Medicaid. Both programs share the same income eligibility requirements and both serve to improve the health and well-being of children. Each project will allow us to pilot the process in a diversity of locations throughout the state. With funds through the Wisconsin Partnership Program, work has already begun to engage school and community personnel in three school districts in Marathon County; we expect to use Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program funding to focus on efforts in the Milwaukee Public Schools and two additional areas of the state.

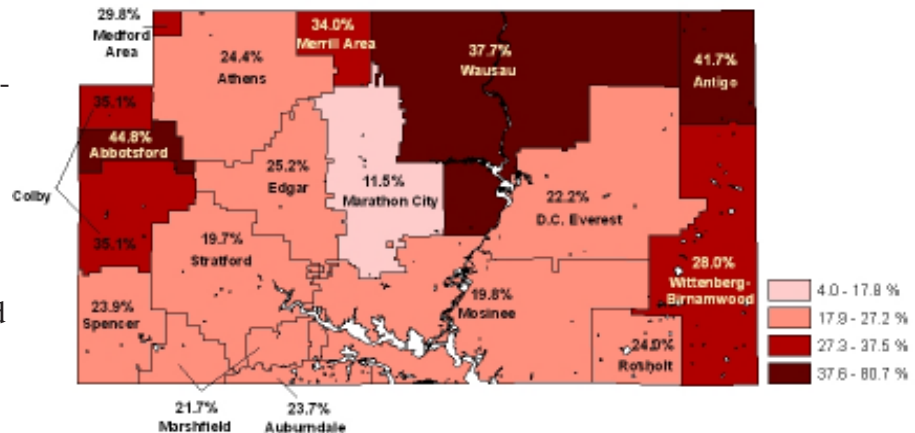
In addition to collaborating with the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and Department of Public Instruction, Dr. Susan Skochelak from the UW-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health, and Gayle Coleman from UW-Extension's Family Living Programs, the new grant project will also involve CKF-WI coalition partner Community Advocates to provide the direct outreach with Milwaukee and surrounding areas and bring in the expertise of Drs. John Meurer and Tim Corden.

Update on Wisconsin Partnership Program Grant

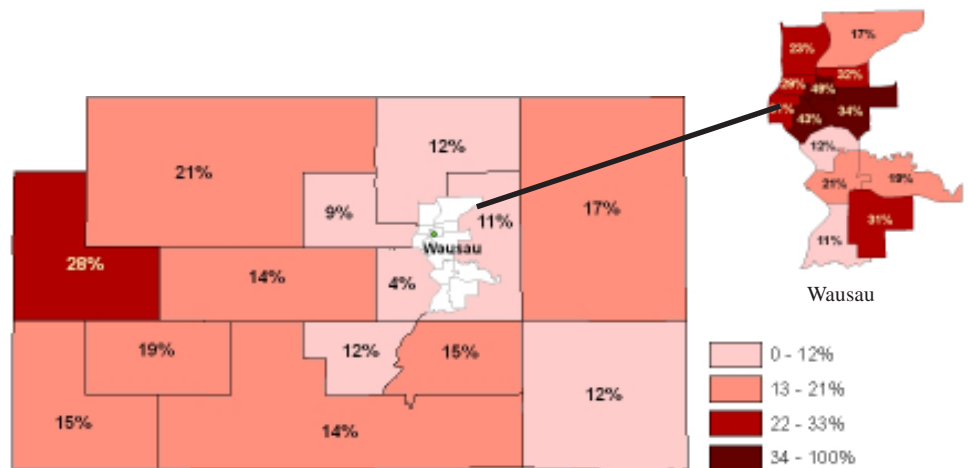
The project has been named Connecting Health Insurance to Lunch Data (CHILD). CKF-WI has had a few meetings with its partners and moved forward with its first pilot location of Marathon County. It is a natural starting point with its range of high and low income populations, urban and rural areas, and mix of racial and ethnic populations.

CKF-WI sent an invitation to school district superintendents, food service workers, principals, social workers, school nurses, local health department employees, economic support staff, and others in the county to learn about the project. The initial meeting drew 22 people representing six school districts and several local agencies.

Next up is a site visit to the school districts for Abbotsford, Spencer and DC Everest to design specific outreach interventions and begin to form a parent focus group.



Marathon County by School District
Free/Reduced Price Lunch Percentages



Marathon County
Percent of Families with Children Under 185% Federal Poverty Level

University of Wisconsin - Madison
School of Human Ecology
Covering Kids & Families-Wisconsin

1300 Linden Dr, Rm 18
Madison, WI 53706

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What's Inside:

- ✓ Cover the Uninsured Week
- ✓ 2007 Federal Poverty Level
- ✓ Health Care Reform Proposals
- ✓ Second Grant Award

Cover the Uninsured Week – April 23-29, 2007

Show your support for insuring the more than 500,000 people in Wisconsin who are not currently covered. For the last five years Cover the Uninsured Week has encouraged coalitions to unite nationwide around the importance of health insurance. Help Wisconsin get noticed by doing one or more of the following:



Submit an Op-ed to appear in your local paper

Covering Kids & Families-Wisconsin (CKF-WI) will create a template and have it available at www.ckfwi.org. You will be able to modify the template to fit your community. The goal is to have statewide coverage.



Distribute materials at local events to educate about Family Medicaid

Free materials provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are available at www.covertheuninsured.org/materials/orderable/. You can order "Help Get America Covered" Action Card, "Spread the Word" Interfaith Action Card, Covering Kids and Families Bookmarks, and the Cover the Uninsured Week lapel stickers.

Run a locally-produced Medicaid public service announcement in your area

The public service announcement was filmed and produced pro-bono by the Timpano Group in Madison this past summer. It can be previewed at: www.imcovered.org. During Cover the Uninsured Week, CKF-WI plans to air it as a paid commercial on TV stations in the south-central and south-western portions of the state. If you are interested in running the public service announcement in your viewing area, please contact us at info@ckfwi.org.



Also, CKF-WI will collaborate with HealthWatch Wisconsin to do a week long series of Medicaid Eligibility Training. The trainings will include the beginner and intermediate information from the CKF-WI Medicaid Eligibility Training, but will also have an advanced level training provided by HealthWatch Wisconsin. These trainings will be recorded and broadcast for individuals to watch online..

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