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Thousands in Connecticut Have Access to Health Care
Thanks to Health Insurance Reform

Recent state based reforms in Connecticut have made a difference, as seen by the increase in the number of people with health care coverage in 2014.

Today the U.S. Census Bureau released official American Community Survey estimates on health insurance coverage, which show that 93.1% of Connecticut residents had health insurance at the time of the survey in 2014, a jump from 90.6% in 2013. The data mirror the trend seen nationwide, as 88.3% of U.S. residents had health insurance in 2014, up from 85.5% in 2013. States that have expanded Medicaid – like Connecticut – have a higher share of people with insurance than states that did not expand Medicaid.

“By improving access to care, Connecticut is supporting healthy child development, family financial security, and more productive workplaces,” said Ellen Shemitz, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children.

Health insurance coverage for children in Connecticut increased from 95.7% in 2013 to 96.3% in 2014. Nationally, child health insurance coverage rose from 92.9% in 2013 to 94.0% in 2014.

Provisions of the federal Affordable Care Act have made insurance in Connecticut available and affordable in the private market and in Medicaid. The state expansion of Medicaid means that the program reaches more low-income workers whose employers do not provide insurance and whose low pay makes private health insurance unaffordable.

Other provisions of health insurance reform are also helping to reduce the number of Connecticut residents without health insurance. Some previously uninsured individuals have gained health coverage through the state’s new health insurance marketplace, which allows individuals and families to easily compare prices and benefits of health care plans. These individuals earn too much to qualify for coverage through Medicaid but do not earn enough to afford private insurance; they receive federal subsidies to help them pay their premiums and reduce other out-of-pocket health costs.
“For families, having health insurance is essential because it increases the likelihood that children will receive regular check-ups and other essential health care services,” said Sharon Langer, Advocacy Director of Connecticut Voices for Children. “While we are pleased to see the increase in the percentage of children with health insurance, we do have concerns that the recent rollbacks in coverage for HUSKY parents will undermine some of this success in the future.”

"Connecticut has made big strides expanding health coverage for its residents, but challenges still loom large," said Frances G. Padilla, president of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut. "Too often, access to the right care at the right time is not available for people on Medicaid. And the jury is out on how many will go without health care as a result of recent changes in Medicaid eligibility for parents. Our work is not done."

“This positive news is a reminder to say thank you again to all who have worked so hard to cover Connecticut. And we must pivot to define what being covered really means. The work becomes about keeping people covered and using their insurance benefits to achieve their health goals,” said Elizabeth Krause, Vice President for Policy and Communications at Connecticut Health Foundation.

Connecticut Voices for Children expects more data to be released tomorrow that will allow for a more in-depth analyses regarding health insurance coverage by race/ethnicity and geography, as well as information on poverty and income.

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