

MEDICAID/CHIP PROTECTS OHIO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Ohioans are navigating a rapidly changing environment as policymakers at the local and state levels struggle to prevent the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from overwhelming Ohio's health care system. Schools, restaurants, bars, recreational facilities as well as non-essential businesses were closed. Ohioans have been ordered to stay at home to avoid contracting or transmitting the Coronavirus. There has never been a time when investing in our health infrastructure and the health of Ohioans has been more important.

MEDICAID'S ROLE IN PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Ohio's Medicaid/CHIP program is a health insurance program for low income families and children. It is a state-federal partnership that helps healthy children stay healthy and sick children get the care they need. In Ohio over 1.1 million children and nearly 1.6 million adults were receiving Medicaid in January 2020.

Medicaid provides a robust set of services to children through Ohio's HealthChek program. These services help youth thrive and support healthy development.

However, during 2019, over 23,000 children lost Medicaid, and over 70 Ohio counties saw enrollment declines in Medicaid for children.

This is concerning as these declines did not correspond with a gain in private insurance coverage.

HEALTHCHEK SERVICES ARE COVERED BY MEDICAID AND INCLUDE:



Preventive checkups for newborns, infants, and toddlers.



Twelve complete medical exams during a baby's first two and a half years of life: at birth, 3-5 days of age and at 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, and 30 months. After that, children receive yearly exams.

HealthChek provides a robust list of benefits for babies and children:

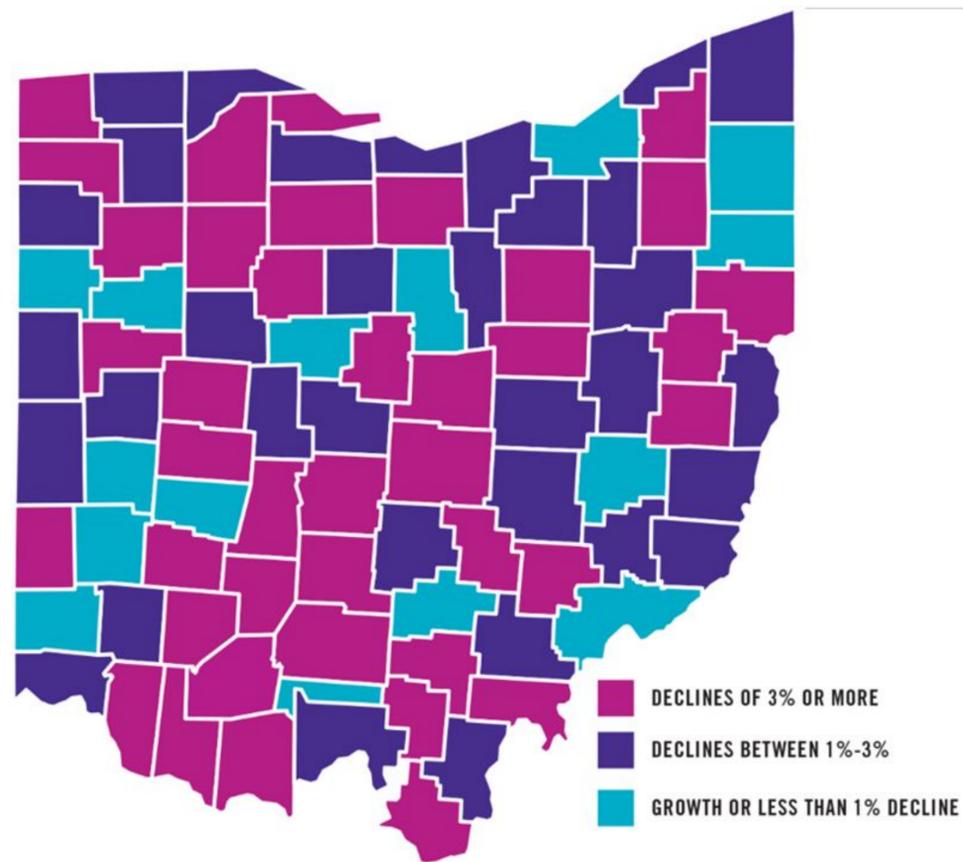
- ✓ Age appropriate physical exams
- ✓ Reviews of physical and mental development
- ✓ Vision, dental, and hearing screenings
- ✓ Nutrition checks
- ✓ Developmental screenings
- ✓ Laboratory tests for certain ages
- ✓ Lead testing
- ✓ Immunizations
- ✓ Medically necessary follow-up care
- ✓ Inpatient or outpatient hospital care
- ✓ Clinic visits
- ✓ Prescription drugs
- ✓ Health education

The growing child uninsured numbers are especially problematic as Ohio battles the COVID19 public health crisis. Action must be taken to ensure that families and children are able to access the healthcare they need.

MEDICAID PROTECTS FAMILIES & CHILDREN DURING PANDEMIC

On Wednesday, March 19th President Trump signed the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*. This law will do three main things to aid Medicaid in helping children and families:

- Provide Ohio a temporary increase in the federal Medicaid matching rate (FMAP) of 6.2 percentage points which could mean up to \$1.2 billion by the end of 2020;
- Require Ohio to cover COVID-19 testing in Medicaid and CHIP without cost-sharing; and
- Require that Ohio not disenroll anyone receiving Medicaid as of March 18, 2020 or those that become eligible during the state of emergency.

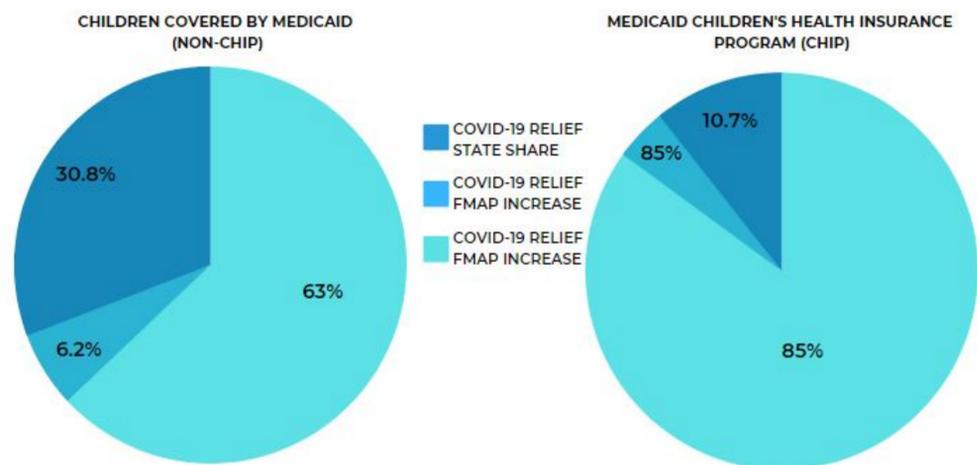


2019 Ohio County Rate of Change in Children Medicaid Enrollments

The *Families First Act's* FMAP increase means that instead of the federal government's share of Medicaid being 63%, it will be 69.2%, meaning an additional \$1.2 billion to support Ohioans using Medicaid services. There is a proportional increase in CHIP FMAP. This will make more Ohio resources available to help additional adults and children who become eligible for Medicaid benefits.

Under Medicaid's state-federal partnership, for each dollar spent on services, Ohio pays \$.37 and the federal government pays \$.63. For children who receive Medicaid through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), the federal share is \$.85 of each dollar spent. Dollars invested in children's health saves Ohio money.

Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP)



Other important features of the *Families First Act* to protect families and children include:

- Increasing funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP);
- Simplifying rules for schools to get meals to children while schools are closed;
- Easing rules so states can provide certain emergency SNAP benefits; Establishing a federal emergency paid leave benefits program;
- Expanding unemployment benefits with aid to states for processing;
- Requiring that certain employers provide paid sick leave to employees; and Providing Coronavirus diagnostic testing at no cost.

MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE TO ADDRESS THE REAL NEEDS OF OHIO FAMILIES & CHILDREN



Children's Defense Fund-Ohio recommends:

- **Expand presumptive eligibility for Medicaid.** Currently hospitals and some medical providers have this authority, and it should be expanded to other providers to assure that parents will seek medical attention for their children whether or not they are actually enrolled in Medicaid.
- **Increase CHIP income eligibility to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and adult Medicaid income eligibility to 200% of FPL.** This will help provide health care at this critical time to near-poor families.
- **Suspend prior authorization requirements.** Request the Ohio Department of Medicaid to seek CMS permission to do this - which is particularly important for medically-fragile children.
- **Suspend temporarily redetermination and re-enrollment checks** and allow local JFS offices to permit personal attestation of income to replace proof of income during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Suspend the Public Charge Rule.** Although COVID-19 testing cannot be considered a public charge, many immigrant families are understandably hesitant to seek medical help if there is a chance that it will affect their immigration status. For the sake of public health - all who live in our community must be able to access the health care they need so we can all benefit.

CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND-OHIO IS GRATEFUL THAT OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE ALREADY TAKING AGGRESSIVE ACTION TO KEEP OHIOANS SAFE. THE TIME TO STRENGTHEN OUR SUPPORT FOR OHIO'S CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IS NOW.