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New Data Finds Number of Uninsured Children Increasing at Alarming Rate

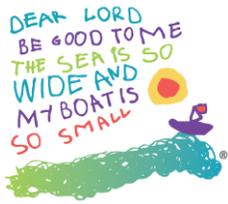*Analysis shows 26% increase in the number of uninsured Ohio children between 2016 and 2019*

An estimated 4.8%, or 131,000, Ohio children were uninsured last year, a number that has increased 26% since 2016, according to a new report released by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. Ohio's experience is part of a national trend that left an estimated 726,000 more children without health coverage nationwide. Much of the coverage gains of the Affordable Care Act for children have now been eliminated.

"For decades, children's health coverage had been a national success story that we could point to with pride, but the data shows the trend is now going in the wrong direction," said Georgetown University Center for Children and Families Executive Director Joan Alker. "What's worse, the number of children losing coverage accelerated from 2018 to 2019 during a time when unemployment was very low. The situation is likely worse today."

The increase in the number and rate of uninsured children occurred prior to the pandemic and associated economic downturn and is attributable to losses of public coverage – primarily Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. The situation has most likely deteriorated in 2020 for children as their parents lost their jobs and health coverage this year, but there is still no reliable data to estimate the extent of these coverage losses.

"After successfully reducing the child uninsured rate in our state, we are now seeing a growing number of Ohio's children going without health coverage," said Tracy Nájera, Executive Director, Children's Defense Fund Ohio. "This damaging trend will have long-term consequences for children and communities across Ohio because without health coverage, children cannot access the care they need to grow and thrive."

Research shows children with health coverage are healthier and have significantly better life outcomes. These children are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college and grow up to be healthier and more productive adults. In short, our entire society benefits both in the short and long-term when all children have health coverage.

"This data proves that it's more important than ever to ensure eligible kids and families enroll in and keep their Medicaid coverage, especially during the pandemic, and advance policies and practices to make it easier for families to get and stay covered," said Kelly Vyzral, Senior Health Policy Analyst for Children's Defense Fund-Ohio.

The report analyzes single-year estimates of summary data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) from 2016 through 2019.

This is the 10th annual report on uninsured children published by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center founded in 2005 with a mission to expand and improve high-quality, affordable coverage for America's children and families. The report analyzes single-year estimates of summary data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) from 2016 through 2019. For more information about the report, visit ccf.georgetown.edu

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About Children's Defense Fund-Ohio
The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.