

News Release: Expanding Medicaid to 131,000 Uninsured Parents Benefits Kids



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January 17, 2013 (Pennsylvania) — Today, the Pennsylvania Health Law Project, a public interest law firm, co-released a state-specific analysis highlighting the impact of a Medicaid expansion on parents and their families. Expanding Medicaid would cover more than 131,000 parents, the majority of whom are working and already have a child enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP.

“It is important for Pennsylvania lawmakers to consider the value of this opportunity”, says PHLP Executive Director Laval Miller-Wilson. Twenty other states (including Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and North Dakota) have already decided to expand Medicaid.

PHLP’s analysis, “Medicaid Expansion is Good for Families”, is co-authored by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families (CCF) and supported by several Pennsylvania child and family advocacy groups: Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, CHOP/Policy Lab, Consumer Community Legal Services, Consumer Health Coalition, Maternity Care Coalition, Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, and Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children.

PHLP and CCF highlight studies that show expanding Medicaid can improve birth outcomes by covering women between pregnancies, and makes it more likely that children will receive needed preventive care and other health care services.

“Covering parents is enormously beneficial to children. If there is a parent at home with untreated health issues, it definitely impacts children’s health and well-being” says Allen Nussbaum, MD, FAAP, President of the PA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. “Children thrive when their parents are healthy and insured. Extending coverage to these parents is a great investment”, says Joan Alker, Co-Executive Director of Georgetown University Center for Children and Families.

PHLP’s analysis includes a table that highlights the characteristics of the 131,000 uninsured parents who would benefit from the expansion. Three-quarters (more than 95,000 parents) already have incomes that fall below the poverty line. If state lawmakers opt out of expanding Medicaid they will create a gap in coverage between the haves *and* the have-nots; a gap that will harm families.

Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP) is the state's oldest health care non-profit law firm exclusively devoted to health access for vulnerable populations. PHLP was founded to advance access to quality health care for vulnerable and disenfranchised communities. In addition to direct legal assistance, we work on policy and practice changes that maximize health coverage and access to care. We are a trusted resource with on-the-ground experience, knowledge of best practices, and an understanding of community perspectives.

The Center for Children and Families (CCF) is an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center whose mission is to expand and improve health coverage for America's children and families. CCF is based at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute.