

NJCIC Celebrates Healthcare Access for Undocumented Immigrant Children and Youth

The New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children and its members celebrate the expansion of healthcare coverage eligibility for undocumented children. We are happy to have joined Governor Phil Murphy's Press Conference in Morristown, New Jersey on Wednesday, January 18, 2023.

01/18/2022, New Jersey- The New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children (NJCIC) joined Governor Phil Murphy along with community advocates and organizations to celebrate and recognize the expansion of healthcare coverage to all children in New Jersey regardless of immigration status.

Since January 2022, NJCIC has been part of the Outreach, Enrollment, and Retention Working Group with New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS) working to increase enrollment of New Jersey Family Care. Cover All Kids (CAK), which was signed into law in 2021, provides for the expansion of eligibility of healthcare coverage to all children regardless of immigration status during phase 2. This expansion was made effective on January 1, 2023.

Priscilla Monico Marín, Executive Director, highlighted the immense impact this will have for children arriving in New Jersey which “ranks fifth in the nation for the reunification of unaccompanied minors with sponsors, with nearly 7,000 children last year.” She adds, “this expansion will create stability in health outcomes for all children and is a future investment for our great state. Healthy children have the tools and greater chance to succeed in other areas. I remain ready to continue our advocacy with the state and in offering recommendations as challenges to enrollment arise.”

“The expansion of Cover All Kids is a necessary step towards a more inclusive New Jersey. By including ALL children, regardless of immigration status, we can ensure that we support the well-being of families across the state who

often hide in the shadows” said Sergio Crespo Flores, a member of the NJCIC’s Immigrant Youth Advocates program. Knowing firsthand the value of access to healthcare as an undocumented youth, he said he is “proud to call this state my home.”

Dr. Douglas Bishop, Family Physician and Assistant Medical Director at Zufall Health offered the following statement “The expansion of Cover All Kids is truly transformative for thousands of children and families in New Jersey. Although care at Federally Qualified Health Centers and other facilities has provided access to previously uninsured children for decades.” Reflecting on the range of services CAK includes, he added “the expansion of insurance coverage opens many more avenues for care. This includes enhanced access to dental, behavioral health, eyeglasses, medication coverage and medical specialty services. Most importantly, it will provide peace of mind to families worried about the specter of medical costs and will encourage early access to medical care—this will help to keep these children and families—and all of us—safer and healthier.”

“As New Jersey continues to embrace progressive policies that make it a fair and welcoming state for all of its residents, this expansion is a reason for celebration” stated Lady Jimenez Torres, Policy Director. As part of ongoing implementation, she “recognizes the need for improvements and an ongoing review of any impending challenges to enrollment for mixed status families, to ensure equity in accessing healthcare services.”

The expansion to this newly eligible population is estimated to impact 18,000 children. Bringing all remaining uninsured children into coverage will have positive health implications for these children, their families, schools and communities. To apply online you can visit njfamilycare.org. For help with enrollment, you can call NJ Family Care directly at 1-800-701-0710 and speak to a Health Benefits Coordinator (HBC). You can also contact your local social services county office.





About the NJ Consortium for Immigrant Children

NJCIC works with New Jersey's young immigrants and their allies to advance their full, fearless participation in our society. We seek lawful status for immigrant children and youth and advocate for systemic change in how they access legal and social services.

For more information or to join our efforts visit our website at <https://njcic.org/>