

# Camden Coalition, South Jersey Community Organizations, State, County, City Officials Launch Initiative to “Cover All Kids”

*Mobilizing to get children without health insurance covered.*

CAMDEN, NJ, UNITED STATES, April 17, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With 16,000 South Jersey children having lost their health insurance coverage in a three-month period last year, the Camden

Coalition, State, County and City officials, and a group of partner organizations launched a new initiative – “Cover All Kids” – to raise awareness and enroll as many children as possible who are eligible for free or affordable government health insurance.



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*Victor Murray, Camden Coalition.*

At a press conference at the KIPP Hatch Elementary School in Camden, New Jersey, the group said they were already working to engage schools, immigration organizations, pharmacies, faith-based organizations, health care providers and others to spread the word that coverage is available and that organizations such as the Center for Family Services, Citizen Action, the Osborn Family Health Center, CAMCare, South Jersey Family Medical Center and

Cooper University Health Care provide free assistance in many languages to parents and caregivers to fill out the insurance applications.

They noted that almost every child ages 0 – 18 is eligible for free or affordable government health insurance – including children who are undocumented immigrants – and that these trusted community organizations can help parents and caregivers for free and in any language.

“The Cover All Kids program continues the Murphy Administration’s commitment to expand healthcare access to all New Jersey kids and to get uninsured kids who are eligible for NJ FamilyCare covered. Ensuring access to healthcare services for New Jersey children will pay health and economic dividends across their lives and makes our communities healthier and safer,” said Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman. “Through Cover All Kids, more than

87,000 children in New Jersey have been enrolled in NJ FamilyCare and gained access to primary care, medication, dental, vision, mental health coverage and other benefits, and we know there are more people we need to reach. Partnering with organizations that are trusted in the community like the Camden Coalition will help us connect more eligible families to health coverage.”

“Every family should have access to health insurance for their children,” said Camden County Commissioner Jeffrey Nash. “Economic circumstances or communications issues should not cause children to go without coverage. By spreading the word and getting kids enrolled, this partnership will make a difference in the lives of countless children and families. We’re proud to be here today to join this effort to Cover All Kids.”

“Camden’s children represent our city’s future,” said Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen. “Thousands of Camden kids being uninsured who are eligible for insurance coverage is tragic and unacceptable. This effort, combining the resources of some of our leading community organizations, will ensure that more children are insured and have access to the healthcare they need.”

“Children on Medicaid are among the most vulnerable and, whether they lost their coverage because of a process issue or have simply never been enrolled, we need to help their families understand what’s available and to navigate the enrollment process,” said Victor Murray, Senior Director of Community Engagement & Capacity Building at the Camden Coalition. “We need our partners who are here today and every healthcare and social service provider in the region to do what they can to help – outreach, education, and referrals to organizations that will get them enrolled.”

“Insurance keeps kids in school,” said Robin Cogan, Clinical Coordinator of the School Nurse Specialty Program at Rutgers University. “Without health insurance, it is much harder for our students to stay well, which translates to missed school days, and that ultimately impacts instructional time. As a school nurse, being able to get this critical information to students’ families is a game changer.”

“We are here for families,” said Navigator Exchange Program Director Jamie O’Brien at the Center for Family Services. “Reach out — we will walk you through the process to get your children enrolled in health insurance from start to finish. We are proud to be a part of the Cover All Kids effort to make South Jersey families aware of the resources that exist to help them and their kids.”

Far too many children in South Jersey are uninsured yet eligible for coverage.

Last year, as pandemic-related programs wound down, people on NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid were required to re-enroll and have their eligibility redetermined. This population includes some of the most vulnerable families and children, including recent immigrants, the unhoused and

others facing complex challenges. This “redetermination” was required across the country, although states like Oregon have put in place what are called “continuous eligibility” provisions for children so there is no risk of termination during key developmental years.

The Camden Coalition’s redetermination data shows that a total of 16,000 children were terminated in the three-month period between September and November 2023 (<https://camdenhealth.org/work/regional-health-hub/>; <https://camdenhealth.org/work/cover-all-kids/>) in the five South Jersey counties of Camden, Salem, Gloucester, Cumberland and Burlington - and 60% of them were terminated for administrative reasons, such as missing paperwork, not because they were found to be ineligible.

In the City of Camden alone, a devastating 3,000 children were terminated from Medicaid in the six-month period between June and November 2023 (<https://camdenhealth.org/work/regional-health-hub/>; <https://camdenhealth.org/work/cover-all-kids/>). A large population of families who are Latino live in the City of Camden and, across the state, children who are Latino are uninsured at a rate two times higher than children who are white.

Pandemic redetermination period requirements aside, New Jersey has strong and expansive health insurance policy for children. Children who live in households with income up to 355% of the federal poverty level – up to \$88,000 for a family of three – qualify for NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid. Most children who live in households above that income level qualify for GetCovered NJ or the Marketplace/Affordable Care Act. And as of 2023, children who are undocumented immigrants who meet the income eligibility requirements qualify for NJ FamilyCare. Twelve states plus D.C. provide coverage to income-eligible children regardless of immigration status.

“We are committed to ensuring that children and youth in Camden and across the state gain access to essential health insurance coverage,” said Greg Woods, Chief Innovation Officer at the New Jersey Division of Medical Assistance Health Services that administers NJ FamilyCare. “We are pleased to support the efforts of the Camden Coalition and its local partners and several other organizations up and down the state to spread the word and get kids covered.”

The Camden Coalition is nationally recognized as a leader in the field of caring for individuals with complex health and social needs. As one of four Regional Health Hubs in New Jersey, it brings local partners together to tackle priority issues for the state’s Medicaid office, from data sharing to pandemic response.

The organization’s Medicaid re-enrollment project for adults has recently demonstrated that many individuals who have received Medicaid also suffer from an array of challenges in their lives, ranging from housing to nutrition to behavioral health, that will likely be exacerbated with a loss of insurance coverage.

This outreach and enrollment campaign is funded by a grant from the New Jersey Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS).

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