

Rhode Island



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**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Luncheon Celebrates the Continued Success  
of RItE Care**

***U.S. Senator Reed, U.S. Senator Whitehouse, U.S. Representative Langevin, Lt. Governor Roberts, Senate President Paiva Weed, House Speaker Gordon Fox and other elected officials and community leaders will attend Celebration of Children's Health***

**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**

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Providence, RI (November 19, 2012) – More than 175 community leaders, elected officials, and health care experts will gather for the twelfth annual *Celebration of Children's Health* this afternoon. The Luncheon brings leaders together to celebrate the progress that Rhode Island has made in achieving positive health outcomes for children. This year's event will highlight the continued success and importance of RItE Care, Rhode Island's health insurance program for low- and moderate-income children and families.

*Covering Kids Awards* will be presented to elected officials and community partners for their contributions to increasing access to health insurance coverage and health care for children, including Governor Lincoln Chafee (Steven Costantino, EOHHS Secretary, will accept the award on behalf of the Governor), U.S. Senator Jack Reed, U.S. Senator Whitehouse, U.S. Representative Jim Langevin, Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts, Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed, House Speaker Gordon Fox, Senator Juan Pichardo, and Representatives Frank Ferri, Deborah Ruggiero, and Scott Slater. Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Rhode Island's two RItE Care health plans, will receive awards for their longstanding commitment to providing access to high quality, comprehensive health coverage to Rhode Island's low- and moderate-income children and families, as well as children in foster care and other children with special health care needs. Dr. Maureen Phipps and Adriana Vargas will receive *Covering Kids* awards for their leadership in ensuring access to health coverage and

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health care. Dr. Phipps is Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Epidemiology at Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Interim Chair for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Women and Infants Hospital, and co-chair of the Rhode Island Task Force on Preterm Births. Dr. Phipps has shown exemplary leadership in ensuring that Rhode Island's pregnant women and infants have access to high quality health care. Adriana Vargas, the Director of Community Relations at Providence Community Health Centers, is being honored for her work to increase awareness and understanding of Rlte Care and to make sure that eligible children and families are connected to coverage and a medical home.

The event highlights in the importance of health coverage in achieving positive health outcomes for infants, young children and adolescents. According to recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of Rhode Island children insured through employer-sponsored health insurance (ESI) has experienced a downward trend throughout the past decade, with 60.6% having ESI in the three-year period from 2009-2011, compared to 73.1% having ESI from 1999-2001. Despite this decrease, children's health insurance coverage rates have been holding steady in recent years, with 5.9% of Rhode Island's children uninsured in the three-year period between 2009 and 2011.

Rhode Island has been able to maintain its children's health insurance coverage rates thanks in part to Rlte Care, which offers an affordable health coverage option for children and families who would not have access to health insurance without it.

"Rlte Care continues to be a national model for its success in ensuring that Rhode Island's vulnerable children and families receive high-quality and affordable health insurance coverage," stated Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. "Without Rlte Care, families would not be able to seek the care they need to stay healthy."

At today's *Celebration of Children's Health*, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will release a report – *Rlte Care Results* – which details the continued successes of Rlte Care, including:

- **Children and adults with Medicaid coverage have the lowest percentage of emergency admissions to the hospital.** Thirty-eight percent of admissions to the hospital for Medicaid members are emergencies, compared with 40% among those privately insured and 81% for the uninsured.
- **Children with Rlte Care have fewer preventable hospitalizations than uninsured children.** The percentage of preventable hospitalizations for Rhode Island children who were uninsured more than doubled between 2001 and 2010

(from 7% to 18%), while preventable hospitalizations for children with RItE Care coverage decreased from 12% to 10%.

- **Fewer women with RItE Care coverage smoke during pregnancy**, which can increase the likelihood of poor birth outcomes. The percentage of women enrolled in RItE Care who smoked during pregnancy decreased by 53% between 1993 and 2010, from 32% to 15% in 2010.
- **The number of women enrolled in RItE Care who have short interval births (less than 18 months between one child and the next) is declining.** In 2010, 28% of women enrolled in RItE Care had short interval births, down from 41% in 1993.
- **The number of babies dying in the first year of life is declining among publically-insured infants.** The infant mortality rate dropped from 9.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1993 to 6.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2010.

“The latest data continue to show that RItE Care works for children, pregnant women, and parents,” stated Bryant. “The public investments, outreach efforts, and quality standards that Rhode Island has used to ensure our children and families are healthy must be preserved and built upon as Rhode Island implements the Affordable Care Act in order to cover more children and adults in our state.”

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*Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education and development of Rhode Island children.*