



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Number of Insured Children in Rhode Island
 Increased, Despite Continued High Unemployment**

*Rhode Island Ranked 10th Best in the Nation for
 Children’s Health Insurance Coverage*

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Providence, RI (September 12, 2012) – Rhode Island KIDS COUNT released new data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2011 Current Population Survey (CPS) today. According to the CPS, 94.1% of Rhode Island’s children had health insurance coverage in the three-year period from 2009-2011. Data show that 5.9% of Rhode Island’s children were uninsured during the same time period. In the three-year period from 2006-2008, 6.3% of Rhode Island’s children were uninsured. Rhode Island ranked 10<sup>th</sup> best in the nation for children’s health insurance coverage.

The percentage of children in Rhode Island covered by their parents’ employer-sponsored health coverage dropped to 60.6% in 2009-2011, down from 66.1% in 2006-2008. Yet, Rhode Island children’s health insurance coverage rates improved, with more children getting health coverage through RIte Care, Rhode Island’s combined Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Slightly over one-third of children in Rhode Island were covered through this type of public health insurance during 2009-2011.

Comparable national data based on three-year averages from the CPS show that the U.S. rate of uninsured children was 9.6% in the period from 2009-2011, compared to 10.4% in 2006-2008. The single year U.S. rate for uninsured children in 2011 was 9.4%. In 2010, the single year U.S. rate for insured children was 9.8%.

“Today’s Census data is good news for Rhode Island children. Despite tough economic times, there was a slight increase in the percentage of Rhode Island children with health insurance coverage,” noted

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “We are fortunate that RItE Care helps ensure that Rhode Island children have the health coverage they need to keep them healthy, especially when many families continue to struggle with unemployment and the lack of health insurance.”

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. In Rhode Island between 2009 and 2011, there were an average of about 146,000 Rhode Island children under age 18 who were covered by private health insurance (including employer-sponsored coverage and direct purchase coverage) each year and an average of about 86,000 Rhode Island children who were covered by public insurance (including Medicaid, RItE Care, Medicare and military insurance) each year. RItE Care, Rhode Island’s Medicaid managed care program for low-income children and families, covers more than one-third of Rhode Island’s children. The number of uninsured children under age 18 was about 13,000 from 2009-2011.

“As Rhode Island continues its efforts to implement the various new options available to states through the federal Affordable Care Act, it is vital to continue to build upon the success of RItE Care, which provides Rhode Island’s children and families with access to comprehensive, preventive health care. It is important that our state leaders continue to support policies that keep RItE Care affordable and comprehensive,” added Bryant. “Congressional leaders also have a key role to play in ensuring that Medicaid and CHIP continue to provide federal resources for our most vulnerable children.”

Children who have health insurance coverage are healthier and have fewer preventable hospitalizations. They are more likely to receive preventive care, be screened for the achievement of developmental milestones, miss fewer days of school and get treatment for illnesses and chronic conditions. Uninsured children are less likely to have a medical home and have fewer visits to doctors or dentists.

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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.*