



**For Immediate Release**

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**According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data released today, 7.0% of Rhode Island children were uninsured in the three year period from 2006-2008, compared with 6.9% of children in 2005-2007.**

**Rhode Island ranks 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation for children's health insurance coverage.**

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**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**

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**Providence, RI, September 10, 2009 – Rhode Island KIDS COUNT**

released new data from the U.S. Census Bureau's *2008 Current Population Survey (CPS)*. The CPS reports that 7.0% of Rhode Island children were uninsured in the three-year period from 2006-2008. This is 16,667 Rhode Island children under the age of 18. This is similar to Rhode Island's rate of 6.9% uninsured Rhode Island children in 2005-2007. Rhode Island ranks 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation for children's health insurance coverage, down from 11<sup>th</sup> between 2005-2007.

Comparable U.S. data based on three-year averages from the CPS show that the U.S. rate of uninsured children was 10.8% between 2006-2008, down from 11.2% in 2005-2007. The single year rate for uninsured children in 2008 was 9.9%, the lowest rate of uninsured children in the United States since 1987. In 2008, there were 7.3 million uninsured children, a decline of 800,000 from 8.1 million in 2007.

"States across the country have made great gains in covering children. These latest national figures show that we can and should finish the job for kids," stated Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. "A majority of states maintained or strengthened their Medicaid and/or Children's Health Insurance Programs despite high unemployment rates and declines in employer-sponsored insurance."

According to the Center for Children and Families at Georgetown University, in 2008 (the year reflected in the Census report), 19 states moved forward in covering more children. This trend continues in 2009 as a result of enactment earlier this year of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) and the economic recovery package.

There has been a decrease in the number of children insured through employer-sponsored health insurance (ESI) over the past decade, from 70.5% of children having ESI between 2000-2002 compared with 67.2% of children between 2006-2008. In Rhode Island in between 2006-2008, there were an average of 156,000 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 79,333 Rhode Island children who were covered by government insurance (including Medicaid, RIte Care, Medicare and military insurance) each year.

In releasing the latest figures, Bryant noted, "As national health reform takes shape, it is critical that we finish the job and cover all kids. Rhode Island has long been a leader in children's health coverage. In difficult economic times, it is even more important to make sure that families continue to have the health security that comes with affordable, comprehensive health coverage." Ms. Bryant continued, "RIte Care is a nationally recognized policy success. Protecting our long-term investment in RIte Care is crucial so that all children in Rhode Island have the health care they need for healthy child development."

Research shows that insured children are more likely than uninsured children to receive preventive care and have a regular health care provider. Children are more likely to receive preventive health care if their parents also have health insurance. Children with health insurance are more likely to receive treatment for health conditions such as asthma and ear infections, that if left untreated can have life-long consequences and lead to more serious health problems. Much of Rhode Island's success in increasing access to health insurance and comprehensive health care for children is due to RIte Care, Rhode Island's Medicaid managed care program for low-income working families that covers about one-third of Rhode Island's children.

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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.