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U.S. Census Bureau Releases New Data on Childhood Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in Rhode Island

***More than one in five (21.5%) Rhode Island children
lived in poverty in 2013, ranking 27th in the nation***

***With 5.4% of Rhode Island children lacking health insurance coverage in
2013, Rhode Island ranks 16th in the nation***

Providence, RI (September 18, 2014) – Rhode Island KIDS COUNT released new data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) today. The ACS provides national and state-level data on poverty and income, as well as health insurance coverage.

Poverty Data

According to the ACS, 21.5% (nearly 45,000) of Rhode Island’s children lived in poverty in 2013. Rhode Island ranks 27th in the nation – and last in New England – for percent of children in poverty. Nationally, 22.2% of all children lived in poverty during 2013. The poverty data are based on the federal poverty threshold which is defined for 2013 as an income of \$18,769 for a family of three with two children and \$23,624 for a family of four with two children.

Children in poverty, especially those who experience poverty in early childhood and for extended periods, are more likely to have physical and behavioral health problems, experience difficulty in school, become teen parents, and earn less or be unemployed as adults.

“Rhode Island’s unemployment rate is beginning to improve, and is the lowest it has been since the recession began. Despite this fact, many Rhode Island families continue to live in poverty,” said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “We need to focus on improving the education levels and job skills of parents so they can qualify for higher paying jobs, while at the same time supporting crucial programs

and services that alleviate the burden of poverty for our children and families. We also need to increase access to high-quality education for all children so they will have the education and skills to compete when they are adults.”

Health Insurance Data

According to the ACS, 94.6% of Rhode Island’s children had health insurance coverage, and 5.4% (an estimated 12,000) Rhode Island children lacked health insurance coverage in 2013. Rhode Island ranks 16th in the nation and 5th in New England for children’s health insurance coverage. Nationally, 7.1% of all children lack health insurance coverage.

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.

Of the children who had health insurance in Rhode Island in 2013, 53.4% received coverage exclusively through their parents’ employer-sponsored health plan, 32.8% were covered exclusively by Medicaid/RItE Care, and 13.8% had either another type of coverage or combination of coverage. Since 2009, the percentage of children covered exclusively by their parents’ employer-sponsored health plan declined from 57.5% to 53.4%, while the percentage of children insured exclusively by Medicaid/RItE Care increased from 26.3% to 32.8%.

These ACS data apply to 2013. Due to a new, accelerated renewal process implemented in June 2014, many Rhode Island children and parents are at risk of losing their RItE Care health coverage over the next few months. An estimated 80,000 children and 40,000 parents are required to renew their coverage by using a new enrollment system for the first time, or they will lose their health insurance.

“For nearly two decades, Rhode Island has been a leader in making sure that our most vulnerable children and families have access to high-quality health care,” said Bryant. “The majority of the children and families who are at risk of losing health insurance continue to be eligible for their RItE Care coverage – they just need to go through a new enrollment process. We need to make sure that we don’t undermine our long-standing commitment to children’s health coverage by terminating their RItE Care coverage due to an accelerated renewal process that is confusing for families.”

Nearly 6,000 Rhode Island children and parents had their Rite Care coverage terminated at the end of August because they did not renew by their deadline. Nearly 100, 000 additional RItE Care members must renew their coverage through the end of December (with staggered deadlines over the months of September, October, November, and December).

“We urge families to renew their RIte Care coverage and to ask for help with the process if they need it,” said Bryant. “Families can apply over the phone or online for the first time ever, or they can talk to someone in person if they prefer. It’s similar to when your doctor’s office moves to electronic medical records – it’s an inconvenience the first time you have to give all of your information again, but then it’s easier from there.”

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and The Economic Progress Institute are conducting a statewide outreach campaign to inform families of this renewal process, and to help community organizations assist families with renewals. Please learn more at bit.ly/RIHCP.

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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.

All Children Under 18 Living Below Poverty:2012-2013

Source: American Community Survey, 2012 and 2013

	2012	MOE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	2013	MOE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
United States	22.6	0.2	22.4	22.8	22.2	0.2	22.0	22.4
				0.0			0.0	0.0
Alabama	27.5	0.8	26.7	28.3	27.2	1.0	26.2	28.2
Alaska	13.9	1.5	12.4	15.4	12.1	1.4	10.7	13.5
Arizona	27.0	0.9	26.1	27.9	26.5	1.0	25.5	27.5
Arkansas	28.5	1.2	27.3	29.7	29.0	1.3	27.7	30.3
California	23.8	0.4	23.4	24.2	23.5	0.4	23.1	23.9
Colorado	18.5	1.0	17.5	19.5	16.9	0.9	16.0	17.8
Connecticut	14.8	0.9	13.9	15.7	14.5	0.9	13.6	15.4
Delaware	17.4	2.1	15.3	19.5	18.0	2.6	15.4	20.6
District of Columbia	26.5	3.3	23.2	29.8	27.2	3.5	23.7	30.7
Florida	25.4	0.6	24.8	26.0	24.5	0.8	23.7	25.3
Georgia	27.2	0.9	26.3	28.1	26.5	0.8	25.7	27.3
Hawaii	17.1	1.7	15.4	18.8	13.3	1.6	11.7	14.9
Idaho	20.7	1.8	18.9	22.5	19.1	1.9	17.2	21.0
Illinois	20.7	0.6	20.1	21.3	20.7	0.6	20.1	21.3
Indiana	22.4	0.8	21.6	23.2	22.2	0.9	21.3	23.1
Iowa	15.9	1.1	14.8	17.0	16.2	1.0	15.2	17.2
Kansas	19.0	1.0	18.0	20.0	18.7	1.3	17.4	20.0
Kentucky	26.5	1.1	25.4	27.6	25.3	1.1	24.2	26.4
Louisiana	28.1	1.2	26.9	29.3	27.7	1.2	26.5	28.9
Maine	20.9	1.8	19.1	22.7	17.7	1.7	16.0	19.4
Maryland	13.8	0.7	13.1	14.5	13.6	0.9	12.7	14.5
Massachusetts	15.4	0.6	14.8	16.0	16.3	0.7	15.6	17.0
Michigan	24.9	0.7	24.2	25.6	23.8	0.6	23.2	24.4
Minnesota	14.6	0.7	13.9	15.3	14.0	0.7	13.3	14.7
Mississippi	34.7	1.7	33.0	36.4	34.0	1.5	32.5	35.5
Missouri	22.6	0.8	21.8	23.4	22.2	1.0	21.2	23.2
Montana	20.3	1.9	18.4	22.2	21.3	2.1	19.2	23.4
Nebraska	17.9	1.2	16.7	19.1	17.7	1.6	16.1	19.3
Nevada	24.0	1.5	22.5	25.5	22.7	1.5	21.2	24.2
New Hampshire	15.6	2.1	13.5	17.7	10.2	1.6	8.6	11.8
New Jersey	15.4	0.6	14.8	16.0	16.7	0.7	16.0	17.4
New Mexico	29.3	1.5	27.8	30.8	31.2	1.3	29.9	32.5
New York	22.8	0.4	22.4	23.2	22.8	0.5	22.3	23.3
North Carolina	26.0	0.6	25.4	26.6	25.2	0.8	24.4	26.0
North Dakota	13.2	1.1	12.1	14.3	12.0	1.5	10.5	13.5
Ohio	23.8	0.6	23.2	24.4	22.7	0.7	22.0	23.4
Oklahoma	24.1	0.8	23.3	24.9	24.0	0.8	23.2	24.8
Oregon	23.0	1.2	21.8	24.2	21.6	1.1	20.5	22.7
Pennsylvania	19.7	0.6	19.1	20.3	19.4	0.7	18.7	20.1
Rhode Island	19.5	2.0	17.5	21.5	21.5	2.2	19.3	23.7
South Carolina	26.9	1.1	25.8	28.0	27.5	1.1	26.4	28.6
South Dakota	17.5	1.4	16.1	18.9	18.6	1.7	16.9	20.3
Tennessee	25.8	0.9	24.9	26.7	26.5	0.7	25.8	27.2
Texas	25.8	0.4	25.4	26.2	25.0	0.5	24.5	25.5
Utah	15.1	1.2	13.9	16.3	14.8	1.0	13.8	15.8
Vermont	15.5	2.0	13.5	17.5	15.3	2.1	13.2	17.4
Virginia	15.3	0.6	14.7	15.9	15.7	0.6	15.1	16.3
Washington	18.5	0.9	17.6	19.4	18.8	0.8	18.0	19.6
West Virginia	24.6	1.6	23.0	26.2	27.0	1.7	25.3	28.7
Wisconsin	18.2	0.7	17.5	18.9	18.4	0.8	17.6	19.2
Wyoming	16.9	2.4	14.5	19.3	13.2	2.1	11.1	15.3

* MOE = Margin of Error

Percentage of All Children Under Age 18 Without Health Insurance Coverage: 2012-2013

Source: American Community Survey, 2012 and 2013

	2012	MOE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	2013	MOE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
United States	7.2	0.1	7.1	7.3	7.1	0.1	7.0	7.2
Alabama	4.1	0.4	3.7	4.5	4.3	0.5	3.8	4.8
Alaska	13.9	1.8	12.1	15.7	11.6	1.6	10.0	13.2
Arizona	13.2	0.6	12.6	13.8	11.9	0.7	11.2	12.6
Arkansas	5.9	0.6	5.3	6.5	5.5	0.7	4.8	6.2
California	7.9	0.2	7.7	8.1	7.4	0.2	7.2	7.6
Colorado	8.8	0.7	8.1	9.5	8.2	0.5	7.7	8.7
Connecticut	3.8	0.6	3.2	4.4	4.3	0.5	3.8	4.8
Delaware	3.5	0.7	2.8	4.2	4.5	1.1	3.4	5.6
District of Columbia	1.7	0.8	0.9	2.5	2.4	1.0	1.4	3.4
Florida	10.9	0.4	10.5	11.3	11.1	0.4	10.7	11.5
Georgia	8.8	0.5	8.3	9.3	9.6	0.5	9.1	10.1
Hawaii	3.5	0.7	2.8	4.2	3.0	0.7	2.3	3.7
Idaho	8.5	1.2	7.3	9.7	8.9	1.0	7.9	9.9
Illinois	3.3	0.2	3.1	3.5	4.2	0.3	3.9	4.5
Indiana	8.4	0.5	7.9	8.9	8.2	0.5	7.7	8.7
Iowa	4.0	0.5	3.5	4.5	4.1	0.5	3.6	4.6
Kansas	6.6	0.5	6.1	7.1	6.1	0.6	5.5	6.7
Kentucky	5.5	0.5	5.0	6.0	5.9	0.5	5.4	6.4
Louisiana	5.3	0.5	4.8	5.8	5.7	0.4	5.3	6.1
Maine	4.6	0.7	3.9	5.3	5.9	1.0	4.9	6.9
Maryland	3.8	0.4	3.4	4.2	4.4	0.4	4.0	4.8
Massachusetts	1.4	0.3	1.1	1.7	1.5	0.2	1.3	1.7
Michigan	4.0	0.2	3.8	4.2	4.0	0.3	3.7	4.3
Minnesota	5.4	0.4	5.0	5.8	5.6	0.4	5.2	6.0
Mississippi	7.3	0.7	6.6	8.0	7.6	0.9	6.7	8.5
Missouri	7.0	0.6	6.4	7.6	7.0	0.6	6.4	7.6
Montana	11.1	1.2	9.9	12.3	10.1	1.4	8.7	11.5
Nebraska	6.0	0.7	5.3	6.7	5.5	0.7	4.8	6.2
Nevada	16.6	1.1	15.5	17.7	14.9	1.2	13.7	16.1
New Hampshire	4.0	0.9	3.1	4.9	3.8	0.7	3.1	4.5
New Jersey	5.1	0.4	4.7	5.5	5.6	0.4	5.2	6.0
New Mexico	8.0	0.9	7.1	8.9	8.5	1.0	7.5	9.5
New York	3.9	0.2	3.7	4.1	4.0	0.2	3.8	4.2
North Carolina	7.6	0.4	7.2	8.0	6.3	0.4	5.9	6.7
North Dakota	6.9	1.1	5.8	8.0	7.9	1.2	6.7	9.1
Ohio	5.3	0.3	5.0	5.6	5.3	0.4	4.9	5.7
Oklahoma	10.1	0.5	9.6	10.6	10.0	0.5	9.5	10.5
Oregon	6.4	0.7	5.7	7.1	5.8	0.6	5.2	6.4
Pennsylvania	5.1	0.3	4.8	5.4	5.4	0.3	5.1	5.7
Rhode Island	4.5	0.9	3.6	5.4	5.4	1.1	4.3	6.5
South Carolina	8.3	0.7	7.6	9.0	6.7	0.6	6.1	7.3
South Dakota	5.8	0.9	4.9	6.7	6.3	1.1	5.2	7.4
Tennessee	5.7	0.5	5.2	6.2	5.7	0.5	5.2	6.2
Texas	12.4	0.4	12.0	12.8	12.6	0.3	12.3	12.9
Utah	10.1	0.8	9.3	10.9	9.5	0.7	8.8	10.2
Vermont	2.8	0.8	2.0	3.6	3.1	1.1	2.0	4.2
Virginia	5.6	0.4	5.2	6.0	5.4	0.4	5.0	5.8
Washington	5.8	0.5	5.3	6.3	5.9	0.5	5.4	6.4
West Virginia	3.9	0.6	3.3	4.5	5.3	0.9	4.4	6.2
Wisconsin	4.7	0.4	4.3	5.1	4.7	0.3	4.4	5.0
Wyoming	9.3	1.5	7.8	10.8	5.7	1.1	4.6	6.8

*MOE = Margin of Error

Compiled by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, September 2014. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2013.
Table R2702.