



Embargoed until 10am, Wednesday, October 28, 2015

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New National Report Notes Sharp Decline in the Rate of Uninsured Rhode Island Children

Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families highlights Rhode Island as a national leader in children's health coverage

National rate of uninsured children reaching historic low

Providence, RI (October 28, 2015) – The number of Rhode Island children without health insurance fell significantly over a one-year period following the *Affordable Care Act* taking effect, according to a new report by Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families. The rate of uninsurance among children nationwide dropped to a historic low of 6 percent following implementation of the *Affordable Care Act* in 2014.

[Children's Health Insurance Rates in 2014: ACA Results in Significant Improvements](#) compared 2013 and 2014 American Community Survey data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau. It estimated that:

- The **number** of uninsured children in Rhode Island declined from about 12,000 in 2013 to about 7,000 in 2014
- The **rate** of uninsured children in Rhode Island fell from 5.4% in 2013 to 3.3% in 2014 – a total percentage point – decline of 2.1%.

Across the country, the five states with the highest percentage point decline in the rate of uninsured children from 2013 to 2014 were Nevada, Colorado, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Rhode Island. The report notes that improvements in Rhode Island and West Virginia are especially impressive, since uninsured rates were already lower than the national average in 2013. West Virginia had the largest percent decline in number of uninsured children from 2013 to 2014 (43.7 percent) followed by Rhode Island (38.5 percent).

The report attributes Rhode Island's gains to the strong RIte Care program and improvements to Rhode Island's health coverage system brought about by implementing the *Affordable Care Act*.

"These data highlight the importance of a variety of high quality health insurance options," said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. "We are fortunate to have

leaders in Rhode Island who are committed to health coverage for children and families – and we are now being recognized nationally for these wise investments. Comprehensive children’s health coverage is the cornerstone of overall health and well-being.”

“When children have health care coverage, they are able to get the preventive care they need to stay healthy and show up for school ready to learn,” said Joan Alker, Executive Director at the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. “It also means their families can afford to take their children to the doctor when they are sick so they don’t wind up getting sicker and having to rely on more expensive care in the hospital.”

The report also notes that improvements to children’s coverage have been shown to provide a strong return on government investment. Research shows that children with Medicaid coverage (called RItE Care in Rhode Island) were less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to graduate from college. They also had better health and economic success as adults.

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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.

[The Center for Children and Families](#) (CCF) is an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center whose mission is to expand and improve health coverage for America’s children and families. CCF is based at Georgetown University’s McCourt School of Public Policy.