

EXPANDING ACCESS: MAXIMIZING ENROLLMENT IN THE MARYLAND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Introduction¹

Over eight million of the nation's children are uninsured. Of low-income, uninsured children, more than 70 percent are eligible for but not enrolled in Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Unbelievably, over 70 percent of low-income uninsured children – over 4 million -- live in families that already receive some form of public assistance, including food stamps, school lunch programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

- Food Stamps: Approximately 8 percent of low income uninsured children live in families receiving food stamps;
- School Lunch: Nearly 60 percent of low income uninsured children live in families that participate in school lunch programs; and
- WIC: Over 20 percent of low income, uninsured children live in families that receive WIC.

Percentage of Children Uninsured

State	Percentage Uninsured
Vermont	5%
Maine	6%
Wisconsin	7%
Rhode Island	7%
New Hampshire	7%
Nebraska	7%
Minnesota	7%
Michigan	7%
Kansas	7%
Hawaii	7%
Washington	8%
South Dakota	8%
Ohio	8%
Missouri	8%
Massachusetts	8%
Iowa	8%
Alabama	8%
MARYLAND	9%

¹ See facts and statistics www.expresslaneinfo.org

Existing Maryland Efforts Lag Behind Other States

The Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) is Maryland's (SCHIP). In Maryland, children are eligible for SCHIP if their families earn up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line. Only one state – New Jersey – sets the income-eligibility level higher than Maryland. But 17 states have fewer uninsured children as a percentage of all children than Maryland.² In 2004, there were 133,440 uninsured children in Maryland, 74,560 of whom lived below poverty.³

This gap represents a failure of program performance.

Maryland can and must do better.

Reducing the Percentage of Uninsured Children in Maryland

The O'Malley-Brown administration will move aggressively to reduce the number of uninsured children, drawing from effective enrollment innovations throughout the nation. These include creative, expanded outreach efforts, simplified enrollment procedures, and automatic enrollment of low-income children whenever possible through a "no wrong door" policy. One particularly promising effort is the concept of Express Lane Eligibility (www.expresslaneinfo.org) which connects uninsured children enrolled in other public programs to health insurance through Medicaid and SCHIP through targeted outreach, streamlined or joint applications, and automatic eligibility.

² See state health facts at statehealthfacts.org – run by Kaiser Family Foundation.

³ Statehealthfacts.org