



children's defense fund ohio

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Georgetown University Report Shows Big Increase in Number of Uninsured Children in Ohio

Analysis shows the number of uninsured children in Ohio increased by about 28% between 2016 and 2018, part of a larger national trend.

COLUMBUS – The number of uninsured children nationwide increased by more than 400,000 between 2016 and 2018, reversing a long-standing positive trend according to a [new report](#) released by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. Nationwide, more than 4 million children were uninsured in 2018.

In Ohio, which saw one of the nation's biggest increases in the child uninsured rate between 2016 and 2018, about 133,000 children are uninsured. Specifically, the state saw dramatic increases in the number of uninsured children under age 6 during this time period.

"Recent policy changes and the failure to make children's health a priority have undercut bipartisan initiatives and the Affordable Care Act, which had propelled our nation forward on children's health coverage," said Joan Alker, executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. "This serious erosion of child health coverage is due in large part to the Trump Administration's actions or inactions that have made health coverage harder to access and have deterred families from enrolling their eligible children in Medicaid and CHIP."

The Georgetown University [report](#) finds that efforts in Washington to repeal the Affordable Care Act and cut Medicaid have contributed to the increase in uninsured children. Other factors include delays in funding the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); elimination of the individual mandate penalty; cuts to enrollment outreach and advertising; the creation of a climate of fear and confusion for immigrant families that discourages them from enrolling eligible children in Medicaid or CHIP; and administrative burdens in Medicaid enrollment and enrollment renewal processes.

"As the number of children without health insurance has grown in Ohio, the number of children enrolled in Medicaid has also decreased significantly. Yet, according to the most recent Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey, the number of uninsured children who are eligible for Medicaid, based on income, almost doubled between 2015 and 2017," noted Dr. Tracy Nájera, executive director of the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio. "As a state, we must do more to ensure that eligible children get enrolled and stay enrolled in Medicaid. This is particularly important in Ohio given the significant investments made by Governor DeWine and the legislature in the recently enacted state budget, which prioritized Ohio's children. These investments included a focus on infant mortality, the first 1,000 days of life, and ensuring that our youngest children receive the health screenings and early childhood services they need to set the foundation for success in school and beyond."

"These trends are deeply troubling," said Melissa Wervy Arnold, CEO of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. "The growing number of children who are uninsured puts them at risk for negative short- and long-term health outcomes. An uninsured child is, likely, not receiving basic pediatric healthcare such as preventative screenings for lead and development or other critical areas such as immunizations."

Without coverage, our children are missing out on critical preventative care, intervention services and treatment they desperately need to achieve and maintain long-term health and wellness.”

This is the ninth annual [report](#) on uninsured children published by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center founded in 2005 with a mission to expand and improve high-quality, affordable coverage for America’s children and families.

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The Children’s Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.