

Children's Health Care Coverage: No. 7*

Children Insured Through Medicaid and NC Health Choice (Ages 6 to 17 Years)

— North Carolina 2007–2009



December 2010

Ninety-four percent of parents surveyed in North Carolina reported that their child (ages 6 to 17 years) is currently covered under some type of health insurance plan. Among children currently insured, 21 percent are covered through Medicaid and 6 percent are covered through NC Health Choice (known as CHIP [Child Health Insurance Program] at the Federal level), a free- or reduced-price health care program for children ages 6 to 17 years. This report compares demographic characteristics, health care, and health status of children with health care coverage through Medicaid and NC Health Choice, ages 6 to 17 years. All statistics are based on parental report.

		Medicaid %	NC Health Choice %
Demographic Characteristics			
Racial Background	White	39.4	48.5
	African American	40.9	33.5
	Other Racial Background	19.6	18.0
Ethnicity	Hispanic	15.9	13.6
Parental Education	Less Than High School Education	17.0	13.9
	High School Degree	37.4	30.1
	Some College Education	29.5	34.0
	College Degree	16.1	22.0
Health Care			
Insurance Coverage Consistency	Lacking Consistent Insurance Coverage in Past Year	13.6	14.5
Usual Source of Care	Most Often Visit a Doctor's Office	81.9	81.9
	Most Often Visit a Public Health Center	11.3	8.8
	Most Often Visit a Hospital (Outpatient, Emergency Room, Urgent Care)	5.9	9.1
Personal Doctor	Health Professional Who Knows the Child Well and is Familiar with the Child's Health History	79.4	81.3
Preventive Health Care	Preventive Medical Visit in the Past Year	82.2	76.0
Health Status			
General Health	Parental Rating of Fair or Poor Health	10.0	5.5
Asthma	Told by Doctor that Child has Asthma (Current)	14.8	11.7
Special Needs	Elevated Need for Medical Care, Mental Health, or Educational Services	20.6	13.9
	Due to a Chronic Medical, Behavioral, or Other Health Condition		
Weight Status [†]	Overweight (Ages 10–17 Years)	24.8	21.4
	Obese (Ages 10–17 Years)	22.1	25.5

* For a detailed report, see: Miles DR, Sexton CM, Margolis LH, Sanderson M. Children's health care coverage and children's health 2007–2009: A report from the North Carolina Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, October 2010. Available at: www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/pdf/CHAMP_Health_Care_Report_2007-09.pdf.

[†] Weight status is estimated from parental report of height and weight, and based BMI percentiles calculated from the 2000 CDC growth charts by age and sex and defined as: overweight = BMI between 85th to 94th percentile, obese = BMI ≥ 95th percentile. Several procedures are used to increase accuracy of parental report of child's height and weight including a height/weight follow-up. Please see full report for further details.

Key Findings

Demographic Characteristics

- ▶ Whites are more likely to be covered through NC Health Choice while African Americans are more likely to be covered through Medicaid.

Health Care

- ▶ Rates of discontinuous health care coverage during the past year are high among both Medicaid and NC Health Choice recipients. This may be due in part to the annual re-enrollment process and attendant documentation required for these programs, while children covered by other types of health insurance programs are not required to re-enroll each year.
- ▶ Parents of children enrolled in Medicaid are more likely to report that their child has had a preventive health care visit within the past 12 months (82.2% vs. 76.0%). This may be due in part to the fact that Medicaid children receive letters reminding them when it is time for a well child check-up and have Health Check Coordinators who follow up on children when they are delinquent for care. NC Health Choice does not offer these services.

Health Status

- ▶ Parents of children receiving Medicaid are more likely to report that their child was in fair or poor health compared to children covered through NC Health Choice.
- ▶ Parents of children enrolled in Medicaid are more likely to report that their child has an elevated need for medical care, mental health, or educational services due to a chronic medical, behavioral, or other health condition (e.g., “special needs”).
- ▶ Based on parental report, approximately half of children with Medicaid and NC Health Choice are overweight or obese.

This report includes data collected from 2007 to 2009 on 5,632 parental surveys of children ages 6 to 17 years from the North Carolina Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (NC CHAMP), a surveillance system that collects information about the health characteristics of children ages 0 to 17 years. NC CHAMP is a follow-up survey of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), a telephone survey of adults (18 years and older). All adult respondents with children living in their household are invited to participate in NC CHAMP. One child is randomly selected from the household and the adult most knowledgeable about the health of the selected child is interviewed. Percentages are weighted to population characteristics. For further information about NC CHAMP, please visit www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/champ or contact CHAMPstaff@dhhs.nc.gov.

