

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Highlights Cover All Kids Initiative to Provide All New Jersey Kids with Health Insurance

03/30/2021

*Nearly 90,000 Uninsured Children Will Have Access to Health Care Coverage Through the Initiative
Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Proposal Invests \$20 million in First Phase of Two-Year Campaign*

PASSAIC – Joined by Senate Health Committee Chair Senator Joe Vitale, Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez, Assemblyman Gary Schaer, Congressman Bill Pascrell, Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman, Department of Banking and Insurance Commissioner Marlene Caride, and Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency Director Shabnam Salih, Governor Phil Murphy today visited the North Hudson Community Action Corporation to highlight the \$20 million investment in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY2022) budget proposal for Phase 1 of the Cover All Kids campaign.

"No child in New Jersey should be left without the support and security of health care coverage," **said Governor Murphy**. "The proposed investment toward Cover All Kids in our budget continues the progress we've made toward advancing health care accessibility, while laying the foundation to ensure that more children are able to receive access to quality health care coverage that they deserve."

"As a daughter of immigrants and as someone who grew up with NJ FamilyCare coverage for most of my childhood, I could not be more thankful for the Governor's leadership here and excited about what this campaign will mean for the thousands of uninsured children in New Jersey," **said Shabnam Salih, Executive Director of the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency**. "Through this work we will not only be ensuring better health care for these children, but removing a significant burden in their lives that will help ensure brighter and healthier futures."

"Governor Murphy is committed to supporting New Jerseyans through every stage of life, which is why he's proposing a new Cover All Kids initiative to provide health care coverage for every New Jersey child," **said Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "New Jersey has been leading the way on health care access for years, and with this plan we will achieve something monumental and fundamental: health care for every child. This is a compassionate and fiscally responsible plan - and it's realistic. It's also - most importantly - crucial for our children and our future."

"Under Governor Murphy's leadership, New Jersey has made it a priority to improve access to health care, based on the principle that health care is a fundamental right. Last fall, we opened our state-based exchange, Get Covered New Jersey, where residents who do not have health insurance from an employer or other program can purchase coverage. That alone was transformational for our state," **said Department of Banking and Insurance Commissioner Marlene Caride**. "Now with a plan to Cover All Kids, New Jersey will continue to chart a deliberate path forward and deliver improved health care access for residents."

The campaign further builds on the Governor's progress in making critical strides in improving access to more affordable health care coverage for New Jersey residents. The launch of the Cover All Kids campaign provides the opportunity to extend coverage to those most in need. This initiative will improve accessibility and remove barriers to cover nearly 90,000 uninsured children in our state.

Phase 1 of the Cover All Kids Campaign

The first phase will remove barriers and support connections to coverage for nearly 53,000 children through FY2022 by doing the following:

- Eliminating the 90-day waiting period for coverage to children newly enrolling into the Children Health's Insurance Program (CHIP);
- Removing premiums families would pay for their children enrolled in CHIP; and
- Developing targeted outreach efforts to boost enrollment for currently eligible children who are unenrolled.

Phase 2 of the Cover All Kids Campaign

The second phase of the campaign begins after Phase 1 implementation and will provide coverage options for children of undocumented status and those whose families' incomes are over NJ FamilyCare eligibility, but still find coverage unaffordable and out of reach.

"Governor Murphy's Cover All Kids initiative is precisely the kind of bold government action we need right now here in Passaic and across this state," **said Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.** "Lack of health care during the pandemic has caused tragedy. Fortunately, our state's local and federal officials are united in our efforts to defeat this virus and strengthen your health care. Thanks to Governor Murphy's leadership and the additional federal resources we have delivered, the state has launched the Cover All Kids initiative to invest in coverage for the 88,000 children who lack health care. This comes on the heels of President Biden's massive American Rescue Plan we passed which makes health care more affordable, makes health services more accessible, and cuts child poverty rates in half. As we look to safely reopen schools and help families recover, we must prioritize the solutions that will keep our neighbors healthy."

"There's nothing more important than having a kid have access to care. All those families that are here today understand what it means when your kids are sick," **said Senator Joseph Vitale**.

"I think we can all agree that one child without insurance is too many and our benchmark for success needs to be covering all kids," **said Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez**. "The legislation Senator Vitale and I introduced charts a course to address the issues barring our kids from receiving coverage. We will expand eligibility to all children who meet the income requirement, eliminate the burdensome 90-day waiting period, reestablish the New Jersey Care buy-in program, and ensure a robust outreach program that will target every child in need."

"This is the game-changer that we have all been waiting for. This is the difference between not doing and doing. This legislation will make fundamental change, not over there or over there, but right here in this wonderful city, Passaic," **said Assemblyman Gary Schaer**. "Whatever your background, your language, culture or religion, we make the difference with this legislation today."

"ACNJ commends Governor Murphy and legislative leaders for their commitment to ensure that all NJ children have access health insurance," said **Cecilia Zalkind, President & Chief Executive Officer of Advocates for Children of New Jersey**. "NJ has long been a leader in ensuring that children are covered. This will remove the final barriers to reach the goal of covering all kids. Access to health care is essential to child well-being. This is a great day for kids in NJ!"

"Having attainable, affordable health care is not just a health issue – it is a critical component for individuals and families to remain financially stable and for economies to thrive," said **United Way of Northern New Jersey CEO Kiran Handa Gaudioso**. "We support making health care coverage accessible so that fewer ALICE households and those in poverty are uninsured or underinsured."

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