



NIHCM
FOUNDATION

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH UPDATE

February 10, 2004

Topics in this update:

1. [NIHCM Foundation focuses on Children's Mental Health and Childhood Obesity](#)
2. [Health Plan Initiatives](#)
3. [Center for Health and Health Care in Schools releases new mental health, dental health, and childhood obesity publications](#)
4. [National Health Interview Survey indicates 3.7 million \(5%\) children in the United States did not have a usual place of health care in 2001](#)
5. [Children's Defense Fund report the number of uninsured children varies by state](#)
6. [In 2002, 47% of children with poor or fair health status were covered by public health insurance only \(MEPS\)](#)
7. [National Conference of State Legislatures audioconference for 2004 SCHIP update](#)
8. [Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs conference "Mental Health – Promoting a New Paradigm for MCH Public Health Practice"](#)

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1. [NIHCM Foundation focuses on Children's Mental Health and Childhood Obesity](#)

Through a cooperative agreement with the Health Resource and Services Administration's (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), NIHCM Foundation is engaging in a series of activities that include: 1) holding a forum on April 14, 2004 to discuss current issues in childhood mental health; 2) commissioning a background paper to be presented at the forum; and 3) producing an Action Brief to summarize key insights and information from the meeting.

Childhood mental health is an increasingly prevalent issue within the health care sector. The following publications are new resources for current information on the needs and treatment of children with mental illnesses:

- Sturm, Roland, Ringel, Jeanne S., and Andreyeva, Tatiana. Geographic Disparities in Children's Mental Health Care. *Pediatrics* 112(4); October

2003: e308-e315.

Although health care disparities associated with sociodemographic characteristics are well known, almost no information exists about whether state of residence affects mental health service use. This paper seeks to examine this source of disparity and determines that large differences in service use and unmet need exist, and are likely the result of differences in state policies and health care market characteristics.

Available at <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/112/4/e308>.

- Glied, Sherry and Cuellar, Alison Evans. Trends and Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. *Health Affairs* 22(5); September/October 2003: 39-50.

While significant changes have transformed the delivery of child mental health services over the past fifteen years, there is still room for research within evidence-based community treatment modalities. This paper examines the evolution of treatment services and discusses its relationship to government policies in child mental health.

Available at <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/abstract/22/5/39>.

NIHCM Foundation released its latest ACTION BRIEF, "[Childhood Obesity: Advancing Effective Prevention and Treatment](#)." Click on the link to download a copy. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.nihcm.org>.

[TOP](#)

2. [Health Plan Initiatives](#)

On October 22, 2003, **Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield** and The Children's Health Fund held the "Childhood Obesity Forum: Crafting a Regional Strategy with National Health Implications". Through a regional strategy to address childhood overweight, Highmark is coordinating the efforts of health care providers, policymakers, and representatives from the private sector in order to initiate implications on the national level. The forum gave participants an overview of the impact obesity has on children's long-term health and well-being, as well as its impact on the entire health care system. It also provided an opportunity to assess community-based programs and strategies designed to address the obesity epidemic. For more information on Highmark's initiatives, please contact Barbara Dubs, Director, Community and Social Programs, barbara.dubs@highmark.com.

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey (Horizon BCBSNJ) coordinated the efforts of healthcare industry leaders and Horizon BCBSNJ executives at a forum in Princeton, NJ on October 10, 2003. Brought together to discuss health policy, obesity, and health literacy, presenters included David

Nash, M.D., Associate Dean and Director of Health Policy and Clinical Outcomes, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Barbara Moore, Ph.D., President and CEO, Shape Up America!, and Albert Barnett, M.D., Chairman, Board Institute for Healthcare Advancement. Dr. Richard Popiel, Chief Medical Officer, explained, "educating our members and other residents of New Jersey, young and old, about the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle is another way we are making healthcare work." For more information about Horizon's obesity and health literacy programs, please visit http://www.horizon-bcbsnj.com/aboutus_press_releases.asp?article_id=389&urlsection=aboutus.

[TOP](#)

3. [Center for Health and Health Care in Schools releases new mental health, dental health, and childhood obesity publications](#)

The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (CHHCS) at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services has produced two brochures (.PDF format) to outline the mental health and dental care services provided under the *Caring for Kids* program. *Caring for Kids* is a multi-site national grant program established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to develop sustainable mental and dental health care for young people by locating the services in school-based health centers. To download copies of the brochures and to find out more information about children's mental and dental health care, please visit <http://www.healthinschools.org/dental.asp>.

In addition, CHHCS published "Childhood Obesity: What the Research Tells Us," a fact sheet developed to summarize key findings on the background and health consequences of childhood obesity, as well as information regarding the connection between physical activity, nutrition and schools. To download a copy of the fact sheet, visit <http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/obesityfs.asp>.

[TOP](#)

4. [National Health Interview Survey indicates 3.7 million \(5%\) children in the United States did not have a usual place of health care in 2001](#)

The National Center for Health Statistics' report, "Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Children: National Health Interview Survey, 2001," indicates that in 2001, 3.7 million children (5%) in the United States did not have a usual place of health

care, and 7.5 million children (10%) had no health insurance coverage. The report provides national estimates for a broad range of health measures for the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population of children under 18 years of age. Topics include: asthma, allergies, learning disabilities, use of prescription medication, respondent-assessed health status, school-loss days, usual place of health care, time since last contact with a health care professional, dental care, and selected measures of health care access. To download a PDF version of the report, go to http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_216.pdf.

[TOP](#)

[5. Children's Defense Fund report the number of uninsured children varies by state](#)

A Children's Defense Fund analysis of 2002 Census data found that the percentage of uninsured U.S. children varies significantly from state to state. In more than half the states, at least 10% of children have no health insurance. The percentage of children without health coverage ranges from more than 20% in Texas to less than 5% in Vermont, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. Nationwide, 12% of the children under age 19 were uninsured. The analysis used the March 2003 Current Population Survey. To read the press release and view the data chart on uninsured children, visit <http://www.childrensdefense.org/pressreleases/archive/031024.asp>.

[TOP](#)

[6. In 2002, 47% of children with poor or fair health status were covered by public health insurance only according to the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey \(MEPS\)](#)

"Health Insurance Status of Children in America: 1996-2002" indicates that from 1996 to 2002, the percentage of uninsured children declined from 15.7% to 12.9%, but the percentage of children covered by public only health insurance increased from 21.3% to 26.3%. Children were considered to have *public only health insurance coverage* if they were not covered by private insurance and they were covered by Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE, or other public hospital and physician coverage. In 2002, 47% of children with poor or fair health status were covered by public only health insurance. The report presents data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS), an annual household survey sponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). To

obtain a copy of the report, visit
<http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/papers/st28/stat28.htm>.

[TOP](#)

7. [National Conference of State Legislatures audioconference for 2004 SCHIP Update](#)

On March 10, 2004, NCSL will be holding a web-assisted audioconference on SCHIP. The call begins at 1:00 p.m. EST. Visit www.ncsl.org/programs/health/webcast2.htm for more information.

[TOP](#)

8. [Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs conference "Mental Health - Promoting a New Paradigm for MCH Public Health Practice"](#)

AMCHP is holding its annual meeting February 28 - March 3, 2004 in Washington, DC. The theme, "Mental Health - Promoting a New Paradigm for MCH Public Health Practice," will have sessions highlighting current issues on access to care, school-based services, adolescent mental health and bioterrorism. For more information and registration, visit <http://www.amchp.org>.

[TOP](#)

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Please send questions and comments to nihcm@nihcm.org or call Tracy Vidinghoff at (202) 296-4426.

NIHCM Foundation
1225 19th Street, NW, Ste. 710

Washington, DC 20036

Tel. 202.296.4426

Fax 202.296.4319

<http://www.nihcm.org/>