

One Third of Children in Suburban Southeast PA are Overweight or Obese and Over 20,000 Have No Health Insurance

When a child’s health is good during their growing years, economic benefits accrue to them and society as they age. Better childhood health is linked to improved educational attainment, better employment opportunities and higher income in adulthood. These factors form a virtuous cycle creating a positive feedback loop with each factor positively reinforcing the others.

Most children in the suburbs are healthy and live in middle and upper income households, yet the share of low income children has increased in each county in a range of 17% to 37% from 2008 to 2012.

Health disparities often persist for these children.

PCCY’s reports examine 15 child health indicators primarily from two sources - the State of Pennsylvania and the Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC). PCCY’s desire is for the findings in these reports to inform the public and policymakers and help drive positive programs and policy changes.



What we found:

We identified many promising trends.

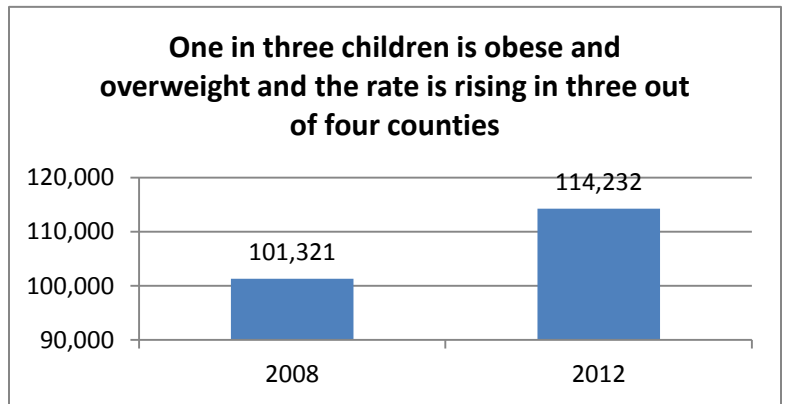
- All counties saw a decrease in teen births and the rate of children hospitalized for asthma.
- Infant mortality decreased in every county but Bucks County.
- At least 95% of children in all four counties have health insurance.

Health Indicators in the Suburbs				
prognosis: progress is being made				
	Bucks County	Chester County	Delaware County	Montgomery County
teen birth rate	↓	↓	↓	↓
children hospitalized for asthma	↓	↓	↓	↓
infant mortality	↑	↓	↓	↓


But we also identified significant areas of concern.

- Even though more than 50% of homes in every county may contain lead-based paint, relatively few suburban children are screened for lead poisoning.

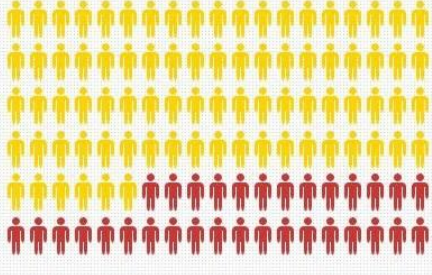
- Approximately 1 in 3 children in every county is obese or overweight, and the rate rose in three out of four counties.




- More than 20,000 suburban children have no health insurance – and the majority of them qualify for public health insurance – either Medical Assistance or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- An estimated 5,700 uninsured children are not eligible for coverage because they are undocumented, and consequently they often face sizable barriers to care.

 **20,000**
children, many of whom are eligible for CHIP or MA, do not have health insurance.

 **5,700**
of these children are undocumented and therefore ineligible for coverage.



documented children undocumented children

 **167**
children represented by each figure above.

What we can do to improve children’s health:

We can overcome these challenges to help children reach their full health potential. To improve overall child health in the suburbs, PCCY recommends that officials in each county:

- Get every eligible child health insurance by reaching out to school district leaders and launching a county-wide enrollment campaign;
- Remove the barrier to health coverage faced by undocumented children by pushing the Commonwealth to qualify undocumented children for CHIP;
- Increase health care provider focus on child obesity by encouraging the state to create a financial incentive for the Medical Assistance health plans to implement healthy weight programs among their health care providers, and
- Reduce childhood lead poisoning by identifying and utilizing local and federal funds to test children and remove lead hazards from their homes.

For a full description of our findings and recommendations, go to www.pccy.org/bottomlinecountyreports.