

Fulfilling Pennsylvania's Promise to Cover All Kids

BUCKS COUNTY

More Than 1,000 Bucks County Children Are Uninsured.

Most Delay or Forego Critical Health Care Services.

An estimated 24,000 PA children are both undocumented and uninsured and approximately 1,170 of them live in Bucks County. They do not qualify for CHIP, Medicaid or ACA Marketplace coverage.

Pennsylvania's 'Cover All Kids' Does Not Cover All Kids. PCCY interviewed a sample of parents and applied the aggregate interview results to Bucks County. PCCY found that¹:

Nearly 9 Out Of 10 Children Received Delayed Or No Care At All For A Medical Concern. Among These Children:

100% Of Parents

Did not seek health care for their child because they could not afford it.

91% Of Children

Received delayed or no care for a serious medical condition requiring the expertise of a specialist.

67% Of Children

Were harmed by delaying or foregoing health care according to their parents.

42% Of Children

Were absent, earned lower grades or had behavioral problems in school because of an unmet health problem.

28% Of Children

Required emergency room care because a neglected health problem worsened.

Pennsylvania Is Losing Its National Standing For Children. Pennsylvania is the birthplace of the federal CHIP program. Five states – California (36 counties), Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Washington and the District of Columbia – have adopted reforms to make undocumented immigrant children eligible for public health insurance. Collectively, at least 202,000 children have gained access to health care in these states by enrolling in public health insurance.

Pennsylvania Can Afford to Expand CHIP Coverage. Based on the experience of other states, PCCY estimates that the cost for the first full year to operate expanded coverage would be \$15.4 million. This amount is equivalent to 10% of the state FY2014 CHIP budget.

1. PCCY interviewed 53 parents of undocumented and uninsured children living in southeast Pennsylvania including 8 parents in Bucks County. We extrapolated the results of the 53 interviews to calculate the projections for Bucks County.

Miguel - Age 11



Miguel sits at the table pushing around the rice and beans on his plate with his fork. “Eat something, hijo,” his mother pleads. “I can’t,” he replies, wrapping his thin arms around his skinny frame. “My stomach hurts too much.” It’s been this way every night and a good part of most days for more than six months. Miguel, once an active, cheerful 11 year old who loved sports, has lost a startling 30 pounds and turned into a listless homebody. He rarely goes outside to play with his friends for fear of an urgent attack of diarrhea. He’s missed more than 30 days of school, causing his grades to drop as he falls behind the rest of his class.

His mother, a well-groomed, bright woman with short brown hair, is at her wit’s end with frustration. No matter how hard she tries to do the right things, she hasn’t been able to get her son the expert care she is well aware he needs. If Miguel were documented like her eight year old child, he would have gotten to a proper G.I. doctor months ago who’d have ordered the necessary tests to get to the source of his pain. What he’s had instead are occasional visits to a general clinic or health center where they prescribe medications that have done little to alleviate his chronic cramps and loose bowels. With expenses for rent, food and clothing, the family can barely afford to pay for these repeated visits. A few times, when his pain was really severe, there were trips to the emergency room, resulting in \$4,000 in unpaid medical bills. Ultimately, it’s not just Miguel who is suffering. His unmet medical issues have affected the whole family, creating an atmosphere of constant stress. It’s a vicious cycle: the costs mount; the pain goes untreated; the anxiety increases.

“All the time I’m worried,” says his mother. “All the year he’s sick and I am feeling so terrible because we can’t afford to see a specialist. I know something is wrong with my son and I know his health is important, but what can I do? There is only so much money we have. If only he had insurance, I could get him to the right place.”

Miguel is not his real name. He is from Bucks County.
The image in this story is not Miguel because he is undocumented.

See PCCY’s true stories and facts in our report,
“Fulfilling Pennsylvania’s Promise to Cover All Kids”

Download the full report at: www.pccy.org/fulfillingthepromise



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