CHILD HEALTH

69% **THE PERCENT OF UNINSURED CHILDREN ELIGIBLE BUT NOT ENROLLED IN MEDICAID OR CHIP.**

To survive and thrive all children need access to comprehensive, affordable health coverage that is easy to get and keep. Unmet health and mental health needs can result in children falling behind developmentally and having trouble catching up, physically, emotionally, socially and academically. Poor children and children of color have worse access to health care and as a result often start life several steps behind their wealthier and healthier White peers.

Thanks in large part to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the number of uninsured children today is at a historic low.

- Since the enactment of CHIP in 1997, the percentage of children who are uninsured has dropped 40 percent from 14.8 percent to 8.9 percent (*see Figure*).[1]
- Between 2011 and 2012, 441,000 children gained health coverage.[2]
- In FY2012, more than 44 million children under age 19 — 57 percent — were covered by Medicaid or CHIP (*see Table F-3*).
- Almost half of all births in America are covered by Medicaid, although the proportion varies significantly by state (*see Table F-5*).

Despite these improvements, 1 in 11 — 7.2 million — children under 19 remained uninsured in 2012[2*] (*see Table F-1*). Over 90 percent of them were U.S. citizens, nearly 90 percent lived in families with at least one working member, and nearly half lived in the South.

By preserving and strengthening Medicaid and CHIP and creating new coverage options for parents, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will provide access to health coverage for 95 percent of all children in America. However, eligibility for coverage does not guarantee enrollment.

- Nearly 70 percent (68.9 percent) of all uninsured children under age 19 were eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP in 2011.[3] More than a third of all eligible but uninsured children lived in three states — California, Florida and Texas (*see Table F-3*).
- The ACA gives states new tools to make it easier for children and their parents to get and keep coverage, but the ease of enrollment and income eligibility levels vary widely, creating a lottery of geography for child's health coverage (*see Table F-4*).

Lower income children and children of color have poorer health outcomes and worse access to health and mental health care than higher income and White children. According to the most recent data:

- Over 2 million children fell below the poverty level because of their families' health care costs.[4]
- Children in poor families were twice as likely not to receive preventive medical and dental care as children in families earning 400 percent or more of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and poor children were three times as likely to be obese at ages 10-17 (*see Table F-2*).

* Wherever possible CDF presents uninsured statistics for children 0-18 because Medicaid and CHIP cover children through age 18.

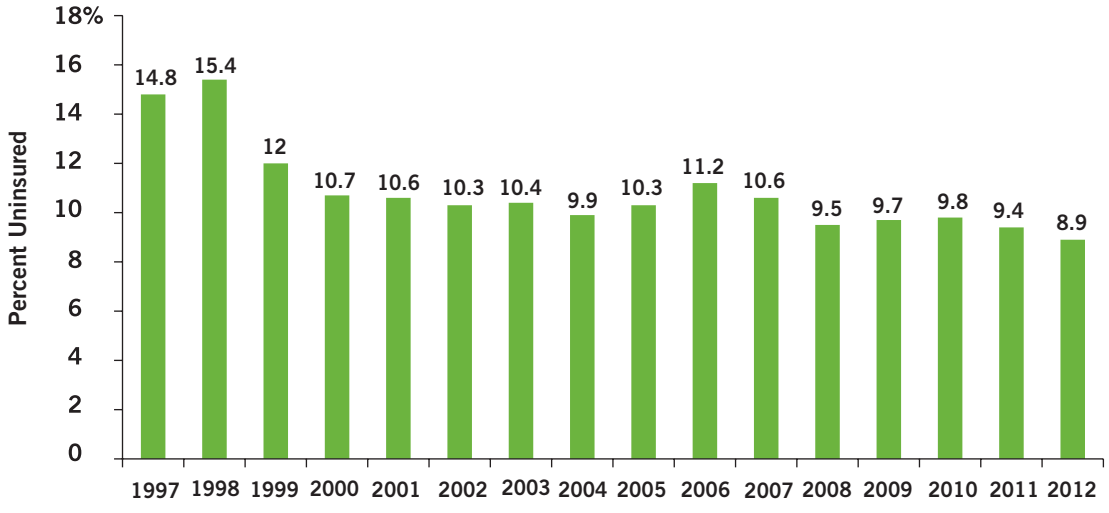
Inexcusable Loss

The inexcusable and unnecessary lost of Deamonte Driver's life is a Dickensian story that started when he complained of a headache. His mother was unable to find a dentist who would accept Medicaid patients, so she took her 7th grader to a hospital emergency room where he was given medicine for a headache, sinusitis and a dental abscess and sent home. He quickly got much sicker and was rushed to surgery, where it was discovered that the bacteria from the abscessed tooth had spread to his brain. Heroic efforts were made to save him including two major operations and eight weeks of additional care costing about $250,000—all too late. He was 12 years old.

- Young children in poor families were more than twice as likely to be at high risk for developmental, behavioral, or social delays as children in families earning 200 percent or more of the FPL (*see Table F-2*).
- Infants born to Black mothers were more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday as infants born to White mothers (*see Table F-5*).[5]
- Children of color were more likely to be uninsured than White children. In 2012, 1 in 7 Hispanic children and 1 in 11 Black children were uninsured, compared to 1 in 15 White children (*see Table F-1*).
- Ninety-one percent of parents of White children rated their child's health as excellent or very good compared to only 70 percent of parents of Hispanic children (*see Table F-2*).
- Black children were 70 percent more likely than White children not to receive needed mental health services. Overall, nearly 40 percent of children who needed mental health services did not receive them (*see Table F-2*).

Find additional data, including state data, in Child Health tables in Appendix.

Percent of Children Uninsured Since Passage of CHIP in 1997



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.