

Steps for Hosting a Health Coverage Enrollment Drive in Your Faith Community

A Healthy Start for Every Child: A National Campaign to Enroll Uninsured Children in Health Coverage

Overview: Recent landmark national health reform legislation will give 32 million people in America, including more than 95 percent of all children, access to health coverage previously beyond their reach. Now it's time to sign up 100% of children who are uninsured but eligible for health coverage and to connect those who are eligible to other sources of health care.

The All Healthy Children Campaign is a campaign across the country in which faith communities, schools, and others are providing eligible children and families a chance to sign up for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid.

The campaign is a continuation of the successful CDF Freedom Schools[®] National Days of Social Action in July when 142 Freedom Schools sites in 29 states across the country held outreach and enrollment events to link uninsured children and youths to health coverage.

The multi-faith National Observance of Children's Sabbath celebration that will be held in places of worship across the country October 15-17, as well as days of prayer and religious celebrations throughout the fall and winter, are an exciting opportunity to host outreach and enrollment events or to kick-off a congregation's participation in the All Healthy Children Campaign that will continue in the months that follow.

The campaign has three goals:

- To link 100 percent of uninsured children in congregations, schools and community groups with health coverage through CHIP, Medicaid or a local health care resource.
- To inform young adults under the age of 26 that they can qualify for their parents' health insurance plan if they are not receiving health insurance from an employer and encourage them to take this message back to their campuses.
- To contact local school superintendents and places of worship and encourage them to hold enrollment drives to link uninsured children with health coverage.

Below are steps to help you in planning your place of worship's All Healthy Children Campaign Enrollment Drive. Contact CDF at 100percent@childrensdefense.org and a CDF staff person will be designated to further assist you in your efforts and provide you with additional materials specific to your state to help you plan your enrollment drive. State-specific packets for planning your enrollment drive can be downloaded on our website at www.childrensdefense.org/healthenrollment.

1. **Identify the number of uninsured children and siblings at your place of worship.** Use bulletin inserts, announcement times, newsletters, and message boards to identify the number of uninsured children in your congregation. Hold a special meeting to provide families with information about the enrollment drive and distribute sign-up sheets for participation.
2. **Contact a local organization that assists families in applying for health coverage to be part of your enrollment drive.** Your CDF staff liaison will provide you with a list of organizations that assist children and families in applying for health coverage in your state. Invite the enrollment

organization to come to your place of worship or another site that you have selected and help sign-up uninsured children for health coverage. You may want to also invite friends and family, the neighborhood and other local places of worship to come to the enrollment drive.

3. Let families know what they need to bring BEFORE the enrollment drive so that they will be prepared to sign their children up for coverage.

- ✓ Provide flyers to families in your place of worship and to parents of children in your education program and child care program, if you have one, a few days before the event to let families know exactly what they should bring to apply for health coverage. (Your CDF staff liaison will provide you with flyers telling families what to bring to apply for health coverage in your state.)
- ✓ Announce the enrollment drive and distribute flyers at parent meetings.
- ✓ If you are making your drive open to the public, distribute flyers in the local community, including other local places of worship.

4. Prepare for the enrollment drive

- ✓ Select a date that will work well for your place of worship and, if the drive will be open to the public, doesn't conflict with other community events. If your place of worship is participating in the multi-faith National Observance of Children's Sabbath weekend, October 15-17 this year, you could schedule the enrollment drive for an appropriate time that weekend. If you need more time to plan, you could schedule the enrollment drive for a later date, but announce it on the Children's Sabbath weekend. If your place of worship is not participating in the Children's Sabbath weekend, you could select whatever date is most suitable based on schedule and other planned events. Remember, while one enrollment drive will make a difference, holding more than one increases the number of uninsured children that you are likely to reach, so you may want to plan to hold several outreach and enrollment events over the coming year.
- ✓ Ask the enrollment organization to provide a brief training for you and others on child health coverage programs in your state. This will help you all understand who is eligible, what benefits are covered in your state, and what documents must be submitted with an application.
- ✓ CDF staff will provide you with a sample flyer, sign-in sheet, sample press release, and a sheet that tells parents what happens after they submit the application.
- ✓ Your local CHIP or Medicaid office should be able to tell you how to get copies of the application. Make sure you have enough materials for every child in your congregation. The application may also be available online.
- ✓ If you are opening your drive up to the larger community, make sure to provide additional applications.

5. Publicize your enrollment drive

- ✓ Include announcements in your place of worship through the newsletter, bulletin, bulletin boards, announcement time, web site, or any other available and appropriate means.
- ✓ Send a press release to the local media to let families know about the enrollment drive. The press release should be sent out several days before the event.
- ✓ You should also invite elected officials, local superintendents and community leaders to come so that they can see the importance of enrolling uninsured children in health coverage.

6. Enrollment Day (E-Day!)

- ✓ Make sure you have several copies of the sign-in sheet. Every family assisted should sign in.
- ✓ Make sure to have copies of applications at the site. If possible, try to have a copier at the site so that you can photocopy documents for families to include with their applications. You should also provide pens and highlighters. Highlighters are especially helpful in identifying any incomplete areas that families need to fill out.
- ✓ Provide activities to entertain children during the drive. Ideas include:
 - An art project on the importance of health coverage for children. Children could create artwork showing why children need health care. Artwork could then be displayed in local hospitals and community centers.
 - A puppet show on the importance of children's health coverage.
 - Reading aloud books that address health coverage and incorporating health coverage discussions in activities and reading times.
- ✓ Collect stories of uninsured children and families who have had difficulty accessing health coverage for their children. CDF will provide you with a story collection form and media release for families to sign if they want to share their story. Collecting stories will be critical for CDF national and state staff to use to inform lawmakers of changes that need to be made in the children's health coverage system.
- ✓ Make sure to have a resource table for children who are ineligible for CHIP and Medicaid. CDF will provide resource lists of programs that are available to children who are not eligible for CHIP and Medicaid.

7. Following up on your enrollment drive

- ✓ CDF will send you an online report form for you to complete and submit. Please make sure to complete the report so that we can measure the impact of the health coverage campaign. The report form will include updates on the number of children and families assisted in applying for health coverage at your enrollment drive.
- ✓ Send copies of the sign-in sheet to your CDF staff liaison and to the local enrollment partner so that they can follow up with families if applications are incomplete or families need further assistance.

- ✓ Make sure that applications are submitted. You can either make sure that the partner enrollment organization takes the applications, or you can submit the applications in the mail or to your local Medicaid / CHIP office.
- ✓ Make sure to thank your partner enrollment organization for helping with the enrollment drive and any elected officials, superintendents or community leaders who attended.

8. Plant the seeds for continued action: Contact your local superintendent about holding a Back to School or Ready to Learn children's health coverage enrollment drive!

- ✓ Now that you have held a All Healthy Children Campaign Enrollment Drive, you can be a leader in your community to help reach even more children! Contact your local superintendent and ask them to hold "Back to School Children's Health Coverage Enrollment Drives" or "Ready to Learn Children's Health Coverage Enrollment Drives" throughout your local school district to enroll uninsured children in health coverage. (CDF staff will provide a list of superintendents serving your area and some talking points that may be helpful in making contact with the superintendents.)

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring EVERY child a *Healthy Start* in life and access to health coverage!