

covering kids & families

Montana children need insurance

According to a recent study, nearly 44 million Americans are without any health care coverage, including 8.5 million children. In fact, 8 out of 10 uninsured Americans are in working families. Here in Montana, over 20,000 Montana children are without health insurance and, as is the case across the country, most of these children are in families with working mothers and fathers.

In Montana, there are programs that offer free and low cost health care for children. CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Plan) offers low and no cost health care coverage for eligible children. In Montana, a family of four earning up to \$28,275 or more may qualify for coverage. Eligibility is based on family size and household income. While the number of enrollees is limited and a waiting list exists, new enrollees are added every month. Applicants on the waiting list currently receive coverage within a few months and all families are encouraged to apply to determine eligibility.

Other programs in addition to CHIP that provide low and no cost health coverage include Medicaid, The Caring Program for Children, the Montana Comprehensive Health Association (MCHA), Montana Youth Care, Montana Mental Health Services Plan and Children's Special Health Services. Information about all of these programs is available through Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies.

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies – The Montana Coalition (HMHB) has received a \$50,000 Covering Kids & Families grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to connect Montana's more than 22,000 uninsured children with low-cost or free health care coverage through the Montana's State CHIP and other health coverage programs. This is the second year in a row that RWJF has chosen HMHB as the lead agency for the Covering Kids and Families grant.

"This is good news for Montana families," said Mike Cooney, Executive Director of Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies – The Montana Coalition. "Reaching out to Montana uninsured families will help connect them to health care through the CHIP program or other low and no cost health coverage programs.

"With funding and support from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Covering Kids and Families Initiative, we are better equipped to make a positive difference in the lives of Montana's uninsured children, who are eligible for but not yet enrolled in a low-cost or free health coverage program," Cooney said.

The CKF Liaison Project grant complements and supports Covering Kids & Families (CKF), a four-year \$55 million national initiative of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that works throughout the country to connect uninsured children and adults with low-cost or free public health coverage programs. The money does not fund any insurance product, but is allocated to efforts to educate families about the opportunities for low and no cost health coverage options. CKF is building on the work and experience of Covering Kids, a three-year initiative of the foundation that has worked to enroll uninsured children in public health coverage programs.

The Montana Coalition of Healthy

Mothers, Healthy Babies is a statewide coalition of concerned citizens, community organizations, health educators, health professionals and public policy makers working together to improve the health and safety of mothers, children and families in Montana.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, based in Princeton, N.J., is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grant making in four goal areas: to assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost; to improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions; to promote healthy communities and lifestyles; and to reduce the personal, social, and economic harm caused by substance abuse — tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs.

For more information about the wide range of options available for low or no cost health coverage, call Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies – The Montana Coalition at 1-800-421-6667.

For information specifically about the CHIP program call 1-877-KidsNow or go on-line at www.chip.state.mt.us.

Montanans Can Now "Chip-In"

In Montana, every dollar provided by the state for the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) is matched with more than \$4 by the federal government. In Montana, tax-deductible contributions can be made to the program and are eligible for the federal match. That means a contribution of \$25 will bring more than \$100 of coverage to a Montana child. To make a contribution or to learn more, call toll-free 1-877-543-7669 or go on-line to www.chip.state.mt.us.