

New national survey of children's health shows insurance gaps, more obesity, more children at risk

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A recent federal survey of children's health shows more than 6.7 million children in the United States don't have health insurance, and nearly 1 in 4 insured children lack adequate insurance coverage. The national survey also reveals that rates of obesity increased from 14.8 percent in 2003 to 16.4 percent in 2007. Today more than 10 million youths ages 10 to 17 are overweight or obese.

The new findings are available on the Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, a project of the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) housed at Oregon Health & Science University (www.childhealthdata.org).

"The survey highlights disparities in health and [health care](#) quality across states and groups of [children](#). The state a child lives in, a child's race, income and neighborhood all significantly impact his or her health," explained Christina Bethell, Ph.D., an associate professor of pediatrics at OHSU who directs the CAHMI team. "That's why it is more important than ever to ensure health care reform efforts address the range of health and health care needs of all children."

The new National Survey of Children's Health 2007 also reveals significant state-to-state differences on a broad range of health issues for children. For example, 23 percent of adolescents in Utah are overweight or obese compared with 44 percent in Mississippi. Insured children in Minnesota are almost twice as likely as children in Hawaii to have insurance that does not meet their needs. And while 82 percent of children in Pennsylvania received needed [mental health](#) care services, only 42 percent of children in Texas received the same access to mental health care.

The national survey comprises 91,642 interviews representing an average of 1,700 children younger than 18 in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. It is sponsored by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and administered through the National Center for Health Statistics, both of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The data is available to anyone and can be searched state by state, or by other factors such as income or race/ethnicity at www.childhealthdata.org. A federal report on the survey, "The Health and Well-Being of Children: A Portrait of States and the Nation 2007," is available at mchb.hrsa.gov/nsch07.

Additional survey findings include:

- More than 4 in 10 children are not receiving care within a "medical home," defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics as care that is accessible, continuous, comprehensive, family-centered, coordinated and compassionate.
- More than 1 in 4, or more than 6 million children younger than 5, are at moderate or high risk for developmental, behavioral or social delays. Yet, less than 1 in 5 of these children received recommended screening during a well-child visit.
- 2 in 5 children who needed mental health services did not receive those services, representing no improvement since 2003.

Provided by Oregon Health & Science University

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