



"When an Apple
A Day
Isn't Enough"

*Students in
IDAHO
Speak Out
About Health Care*

Campaign for Children's Health Care
April 2007

Excerpted from
“When an Apple a Day Isn’t Enough”
Students Speak Out about Health Care Coverage

Campaign for Children’s Health Care

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To obtain the complete book of essays, e-mail your request to
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Introduction

The Campaign for Children's Health Care is dedicated to making high-quality, affordable health coverage for all of America's children a top national priority. We are a diverse group of organizations who represent health care providers, educators, parents, advocates, and others, all of whom share a commitment to our nation's children. The campaign coordinates public education efforts across the country to demonstrate the importance of health insurance for children and families and to show why national action is needed to expand coverage for children.

More than 9 million children lack health insurance in the United States, the wealthiest nation in the world, and millions more are underinsured. Investing in children's health returns innumerable benefits, including improved development and health, improved school performance, and long-term savings in health care costs. We believe it is time for our leaders to take action.

More information about the campaign's activities and partner organizations is available online at www.childrenshealthcampaign.org. In addition to the essay contest, the campaign is sponsoring a petition to make children's health coverage a national priority. By signing the petition, people are calling on the President and Congress to begin work immediately on legislation that will provide comprehensive, affordable, high-quality health coverage for all children. To join the campaign, sign the petition, and learn more about the importance of children's health coverage, go to our Web site at www.childrenshealthcampaign.org.



Who Are America's Uninsured Children?

- About one in every eight American children has no health insurance—that's 9,157,000 children.
- If all of America's uninsured children held hands, they would stretch 6,936 miles—two-and-a-half times the distance from San Francisco to Washington, D.C.
- The majority of uninsured children—78 percent—live in working families.
- Children in low-income families are significantly more likely to be uninsured than those in higher-income families.
- Although more white children are uninsured, minority children are at greater risk of being uninsured.

Six Good Reasons Why All Children Should Have Health Insurance

1 Children with insurance are more likely to have a usual source of care.

- Children with insurance are eight times more likely to have a usual source of care.
- In 2003, uninsured children were 2.7 times more likely than insured children not to have seen a health care provider in the previous 12 months.

2 Children with insurance are more likely to have access to preventive care.

- Children in public programs are one-and-one-half times more likely to obtain well-child care than uninsured children.
- In 2003, uninsured children were more than twice as likely to have gone without a preventive care visit in the past year as insured children.

3 Children with insurance get the health care services they need.

- Uninsured children are 10 times more likely to have an unmet health care need than insured children.

4 Insuring children will help close the racial disparities gap.

- Among African American children, those who are uninsured are 20 times more likely to forgo needed medical care.
- Among Hispanic children, those who are uninsured are 10 times more likely to forgo needed medical care.

5 Health insurance helps improve social and emotional development.

- Uninsured children are nearly one-and-a-half times more likely to have missed a hearing screening than children who are insured.
- Uninsured children are also almost one-and-a-half times more likely to have missed a vision screening than children who are insured.

6 Insured children are better equipped to do well in school.

- Uninsured children with poorly controlled chronic diseases like asthma can suffer poor academic performance if their health condition causes them to miss many days of school. For example, children miss more than 14 million days of school each year because of asthma.
- Insurance improves children's access to the medications and treatment they need to control chronic diseases, allowing them to miss fewer days of school.

Expanding Children's Health Coverage

Two public programs—the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medicaid—have significantly expanded health coverage for children and improved the care they receive. These programs provide a strong foundation we can build on to expand coverage to uninsured children.

SCHIP covers more than 4 million children, the majority of whom would otherwise be uninsured. (The SCHIP program is known by different names in different states. In Idaho, it is called *Child Health Insurance Program [CHIP]*.) It bridges the gap between Medicaid and private insurance, offering uninsured children in near-poor and moderate-income families affordable health coverage. SCHIP also plays an important role in reducing disparities in minority children's access to health care.

The SCHIP program will expire in 2007 unless it is renewed by Congress and the President. In order to strengthen and build on the success of this important program, Congress must provide sufficient funding to make sure that the children who are currently enrolled in SCHIP do not lose their coverage. Just as importantly, Congress should provide funds to reach out and expand coverage to children who are eligible for the program but not enrolled.

About the Essay Contest

The Campaign for Children’s Health Care sponsored this national essay contest, “When an Apple a Day Isn’t Enough,” to generate awareness among America’s youth about the importance of providing health coverage to all young people. We asked students aged nine to 18 to answer the following questions:

- For students aged 9-13: Many children and young people get sick or hurt and need to go to the hospital or see the doctor. Write one paragraph about a time when you or a friend were helped by a doctor. Then, write a second paragraph about why it is important for all children to be able to see a doctor.
- For students aged 14-18: In the United States, more than 9 million people under the age of 19 do not have health insurance. You or someone in your community may not have health insurance. Describe in the first person a teenager or child with no health insurance and explain how the lack of health insurance affects that person’s life. If you do not know someone without health insurance, imagine how not having health insurance can be a struggle.

The campaign recognizes that the voices of children should be represented in the national debate on the future of children’s health coverage in the United States. We were thrilled when more than 4,500 students from across the nation took the time to be part of this debate. By submitting their essays, these students provided the campaign with a unique and profound perspective on how health coverage makes a difference in people’s lives. The thousands of essays we received were passionate, well-articulated, and well-researched. And, as a group, they represent the views of families from all locations, socioeconomic levels, races and ethnicities, and political parties.

Again and again, these essays emphasized that our nation’s families, especially children, need help finding affordable, quality health insurance. As you will see in the essays presented in this book, our nation’s children, both the uninsured and the underinsured, are paying the price in our broken health care system.

The original publication is a compilation of essays from the grand prize winners, as well as the state winners from each age category. To preserve the integrity of the essays, we made minimal spelling and grammatical changes. The overall message and content of the essays are presented in their original form.

It is our hope that these essays will inform state and federal lawmakers about the urgent need to provide coverage to our nation’s youth. The young people in America have contributed their voice and their views to this dialogue. Now, it is time for us to listen.

🌀 Idaho Winner 🌀

Ages 14 to 18:
Lindsey Daudt
Age 15, Grade 11
Meridian, Idaho

Lindsey Daudt

Age 15, Grade 11
Meridian, Idaho

The ability for many American citizens to get health coverage and services is quickly decreasing. Not only is the number of uninsured increasing, but so are the costs of healthcare services. Fewer employers are paying for healthcare and because of the strict standards not everyone is protected by the government funded agencies. This creates a situation in which health services become less and less available to many adults and children. If we allow the American Healthcare System to continue its downward spiral, soon we will be unable to effectively treat anyone. We, as United States citizens, can fix this problem if we can only start to think about others, instead of just ourselves.

Even though there are many government funded healthcare programs in effect, such as Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIP, there are approximately 46 million Americans still uninsured, many of these are children. The people that are uninsured aren't people who are below the poverty line; but people that are working citizens who make too much to qualify for government aid and too little to pay for health insurance. Another major reason so many people are uninsured is because people are uninformed about government insurance programs. They think that they wouldn't be able to qualify if they applied or they don't even know about the programs at all.

After my parents' divorce a couple of years ago, my mom became uninsured because my dad's job provided the healthcare coverage. She stayed this way for about 2 years because, like most, she did not make quite enough money to pay for insurance herself; and was self employed, so she couldn't receive insurance through her job. My brother and I were still covered by dad's insurance, so we weren't affected physically by my mom being uninsured; however, we were affected emotionally.



While my mom was uninsured, my brother and I had a difficult time. We worried often about what would happen if she had gotten sick or was in an accident. I knew if this happened it would cost a lot of money, and she may not get treated at all. Many times when she

was really sick, she would avoid going to the doctor and just do a self diagnosis and treatment. This can be dangerous because if a person is extremely sick and they evade the doctor, because of costs, they can end up dying from something that could have been easily treated. To our relief, and luck, nothing bad happened to her before she got insurance, a little less than a year ago. Many people are not as lucky as we were. Countless individuals have suffered devastating consequences, such as declaring bankruptcy, because they became terribly sick while uninsured; which led to expensive treatments they could not pay for.

The availability of insurance is not only the thing that is down, but so is the availability of the actual treatments. As the number of uninsured rises, the number of hospitals and emergency rooms decrease. This is because hospitals get less money as they treat the uninsured that can't pay for their treatments; the hospitals start to go into the red and have to close. This decreases the availability of health care for everyone, not just the uninsured.

An easy solution to increase the number of hospitals and the availability of treatment is decrease the number of uninsured. There are many ways to decrease that number; such as starting public service announcements and providing information at Parent/Teacher

Nights at local schools to get the word out about government funded programs. We could also provide free preventative medicine, like check-ups, to everyone, especially children. This could greatly decrease the amount of money America spends on diseases that could have easily been prevented; which would allow more money to be put towards hospitals and programs providing insurance for all the uninsured, not just those far below the poverty line.

When one person is uninsured it not only affects them, but all of their friends and family as well. The people around the uninsured have to deal with the stress of worrying about whether their uninsured loved ones will get in an accident and have to go to the hospital, or if they will just avoid getting treatments when they really need it. The uninsured have 25 percent higher mortality rates, and are more likely to die at a younger age, than people who are insured. This is a shocking amount of deaths that can easily be prevented by simply providing people healthcare coverage. As the number of uninsured rises, the more young American citizens go untreated and can possibly die. If we cannot protect the youth of America by providing insurance and health care services, we cannot protect our future as a country.

Our Partners

Campaign for Children's Health Care

AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families
Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association on Mental Retardation
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Medical Student Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Public Health Association
Appleseed
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Catholic Charities USA
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Catholic Health Initiatives
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
The Children's Health Fund
Children's Partnership
Coalition on Human Needs
Consumers Union
Council for Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ
Docs for Tots
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Every Child Matters Education Fund
Families USA
Generations United
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Lutheran Services in America
MomsRising.org
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Mental Health Planning Advisory Councils
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers, Inc.
National Head Start Association
National Health Law Program
National Immigration Law Center
National Indian Health Board
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RESULTS
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Universal Health Care Action Network
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