



*the independent voice for Kentucky's children*

## **KENTUCKY YOUTH ADVOCATES - Press Release**

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### Health Coverage Continues to Increase for Children in Kentucky

Jeffersontown, KY – Over the last decade the number of uninsured Kentucky children has decreased by 2.9 percentage points. According to the new Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), 5.8 percent of children in Kentucky had no health coverage in 2010-2011, down from 8.7 percent in 2000-2001. Also, in Kentucky, 14.6 percent of the population under 65 lacked health coverage in 2010-2011, down from 15.8 percent in 2008-2009. Across the country, 16 percent of the overall population lacked health coverage in 2010-2011.

"The changing health care landscape in Kentucky and across the nation inspires both hope and fear for the health of Kentucky's children. While there is vast political toxicity around the Affordable Care Act, some provisions of the act have undoubtedly impacted the lives of Kentucky's children and young adults. Leaders in Frankfort and in Washington must stop using health coverage as part of re-election gamesmanship," said Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates.

The Affordable Care Act stipulated that children with preexisting conditions could not be denied health coverage; lifetime coverage limits were banned so that children who are sick at a young age can't be denied access to care later in life; and, children transitioning from youth to adulthood can stay on their parents insurance until age 26. The increase seen in children with insurance could be a result of these positive provisions for kids, and we can expect to see an even lower number of uninsured among children and adults as more provisions go into effect in the coming years.

In the midst of these positive provisions for kids' health due to the Affordable Care Act, the transition to Medicaid managed care has been far from positive in the Commonwealth since it began in November 2011. There have been many parents experiencing confusion about which plan their children are assigned to, parents unable to find a provider that takes their plan close to their homes, and lawsuits between health care providers, the managed care companies and the state related to network adequacy, delayed payments, and the cost of providing care to the patients. These issues cause vast concern as similar changes will come to the Passport region in the near future.

"No matter what happens with Medicaid managed care or Obamacare in the future, we must hold our state leaders accountable for their decisions that directly impact the health care environment for our kids. Party lines and politics can no longer be at the center of kids' health care," Brooks added.

Along with health insurance data, the CPS also includes some income and poverty data. The preliminary poverty rate for the total population in Kentucky for 2010-2011 is 16.8 percent, up from 12.6 percent in 2000-2001. Because the sample size for state-level poverty and income data is not large enough to provide reliable state sampling, the Census Bureau generally favors the American Community Survey (ACS) data for analysis of state poverty and income, which will be released on September 20. Kentucky Youth Advocates (KYA) will issue another press release with analysis of both the income and poverty data that day.

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**Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.

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