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**COLORADO'S UNINSURED KIDS AND FAMILIES MUST RUN MAZE  
TO ENROLL IN PUBLIC HEALTH CARE COVERAGE**

*Recommendations Show How Colorado Can Improve*

**Denver** – A new report released today by Colorado's Covering Kids and Families (CKF) project details the complex maze faced by Colorado parents trying to cover their uninsured children and families through Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+). This first-of-its-kind report details concrete improvements the state can adopt to create a clear path to coverage for the estimated 78,000 uninsured children who are already eligible for these programs but remain uninsured.

"We know how to make the system work a lot better for parents and taxpayers, and most importantly, for uninsured Colorado children," said Stacey Moody, director of the CKF Project.

The report, *The Maze: The Barriers That Keep Colorado's Eligible Children and Families Out of Medicaid and CHP+ and Recommendations to Create a Direct Path to Enrollment*, details more than 40 specific barriers that stand between uninsured Colorado children and the coverage they need. Barriers include:

- Inadequate state investments in community-based outreach sites hinder sites ability to effectively help families apply for Medicaid and CHP+;
- Complex and outdated forms cause families to file "incomplete" applications, even when they complete the forms;
- Overburdened eligibility sites provide poor customer service;
- Inconsistent income rules in Medicaid and CHP+ cause confusion and overload the eligibility system; and
- A computer system plagued with problems delays application processing and produces confusing information requests for parents.

The report also recommends 20 specific policy reforms Governor Bill Ritter and the Colorado Legislature can make to eliminate these barriers and improve enrollment and retention of eligible children in public health programs. The CKF project singled out a subset of five reforms that can be adopted this year and would have the most immediate benefit for families and taxpayers:

- Keep Eligible Kids Covered – Give parents the option to renew coverage for children who are already eligible by phone or online. This will reduce problems and delays caused by confusing printed forms.
- Leverage Community Partnerships – Rather than relying only on state outreach to find uninsured children, Colorado should partner with community-based

organizations such as schools, clinics and churches that already have relationships with the families of uninsured children

- Simplify and Standardize Income Rules – Create uniform income rules so parents can deduct costs like child care and out-of-pocket medical expenses from family income when determining a child's eligibility for Medicaid, as they currently can for CHP+, to ease the burden on Colorado's overworked eligibility system
- Fix the Computers – Fund repairs to the eligibility computer system to give Colorado families and taxpayers the same accurate and timely processing rates other states' systems deliver
- Get the Data – Provide the means to gather hard data on where uninsured children live, why applications are denied, and why eligible children lose coverage, in order to prioritize reform options to maximum the return for kids and taxpayers.

"If Colorado's leaders are serious about covering eligible but uninsured kids, they'll consider these reforms immediately and continue tearing down the maze," said Moody.

Stephanie Arenales and Stacey Moody authored the report for the CKF Project. The report was supported by a grant from The Colorado Trust, a statewide grantmaking foundation dedicated to achieving access to health for all Coloradans.

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To view the full report, click [here](#). For more information or to interview a CKF representative, please contact Stacey Moody at (303) 861-5165, Ext. 249, or [stacey@cchn.org](mailto:stacey@cchn.org).

CKF is a statewide coalition of 190 organizations and over 500 individuals with experience and expertise in outreach and enrollment for Medicaid and Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+). CKF's mission is to ensure that eligible children and families can enroll and remain enrolled in Medicaid and CHP+ by supporting and facilitating effective outreach, simplifying the enrollment and re-enrollment process, and improving coordination between the programs. For over six years, the CKF coalition has assessed the ongoing needs of state and local communities and informed policy recommendations on Medicaid and CHP+ outreach, enrollment and retention. For more information about CKF, please visit [www.cchn.org/ckf](http://www.cchn.org/ckf).