

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 28, 2008**

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**Parents reminded of child health coverage programs during  
*Cover the Uninsured Week, April 27 – May 3***

Bismarck, N.D. - While the number of uninsured children in the state has declined, the North Dakota Department of Human Services wants to remind parents that if their children are uninsured help is available. In recognition of "Cover the Uninsured Week," the department is urging parents of uninsured children to call 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669). This toll free number will connect parents with government and private healthcare coverage programs for qualifying children.

"Rising incomes, a stable employer-based health coverage market, and government and private healthcare coverage programs are helping reduce the number of uninsured kids," said the Department's Medicaid Director Maggie Anderson. "However, we want to remind parents that if their children do not have health insurance, help is available from public and private healthcare coverage programs."

In 1997, the year state lawmakers first approved the Children's Health Insurance Program, the child advocacy organization Kids Count reported that 14 percent of the state's children age 17 and younger were uninsured. According to their most recent data (2005), the percentage of uninsured North Dakota children declined to 10 percent.

Anderson said the N.D. Department of Human Services helps thousands of low-income children get a healthy start in life by providing healthcare coverage through the Healthy Steps State Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid. Both programs also pay for dental and mental health services.

In February 2008, the Healthy Steps Program covered 4,027 children, and North Dakota Medicaid covered an additional 27,819 children and young adults with disabilities up to age 21. The North Dakota Caring Foundation program, Caring for Children, which is administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota covered 646 children that month.

Blue Cross Blue Shield and the department work closely to coordinate coverage. Parents of uninsured children who call 1-877-KIDS NOW (1-877-543-7669) are connected to the coverage program appropriate for their income. Parents complete one application, which works for all three healthcare coverage programs: Medicaid, Healthy Steps and Caring for Children.

To learn more about health coverage programs in North Dakota see  
<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/medicalserv/index.html>

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