

New Brief Highlights Policy Options to Achieve Universal Health Coverage for Children

PolicyLab Director Dr. David Rubin stresses that now more than ever ambitious policy action is needed to meet families' health care needs

Philadelphia, PA – April 2, 2020 – A new *Evidence to Action* brief from PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), "[Universal Health Coverage for Children: Current Barriers and New Paths Forward](#)," outlines the barriers families face in accessing comprehensive and affordable coverage for their children, and presents a menu of policy options for state and federal policymakers to use in addressing the rise in uninsurance and underinsurance among our nation's children.

Written before the current pandemic, this new brief—and [complementary summary one-pager](#)—dives deep into the recent fragmentation of the children's health insurance market, highlights the affordability crisis families are facing, and explores the factors contributing to uninsurance and underinsurance among children. With that as a backdrop, the brief offers a range of policy options for federal and state decision-makers to consider, including proposals that address:

- Leveraging Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to achieve universal and comprehensive coverage for all children
- Enhancing Medicaid and CHIP enrollment and retention
- Improving affordability and strengthening the quality of employer-sponsored and marketplace coverage

A statement from Dr. David Rubin, director of PolicyLab, on the new brief and its increased importance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic follows:

"The incredible number of families losing jobs, health insurance, and employment benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic is only magnifying the importance of us stabilizing the children's health insurance market to address the troubling trend in rising uninsurance and underinsurance among our nation's youth. The robust public programs children and families rely on for health coverage remain at risk, and other options that families count on—like employer-sponsored insurance—are becoming too costly for many. Challenges of affordability and adequacy are hitting low- and middle-income families the hardest, and these inequities will only become more stark in the midst of a severe economic downturn. We urgently need to explore bold strategies to increase access to and affordability of coverage for all children.

"This brief provides options for policymakers to take the ambitious action needed to stabilize the children's health insurance market and continue to make gains in the years ahead to achieve universal coverage for kids, a potential stepping stone to achieving it for the population as a whole."

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About PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) is dedicated to achieving optimal child health and well-being by informing program and policy changes through interdisciplinary research. Founded in 2008, PolicyLab is a Center of Emphasis within the CHOP Research Institute, one of the largest pediatric research institutes in the country. With more than 30 highly

regarded faculty and 60 passionate staff who bring expertise from myriad of fields covering health, research and health policy, our work focuses on improving public systems, improving health care delivery and improving child health outcomes. For more information, visit <http://www.policylab.chop.edu>.