

SPRINGFIELD'S CHILDREN NEED YOUR HELP!!

Early Childhood Education

Children from low-income families who participate in high-quality early childhood education programs show the most benefits - they repeat fewer grades and learn at higher levels.

- There are approximately 14,000 children in Springfield under the age of 6...of these children, close to 40% live below the federal poverty line.
- Nearly 1,000 eligible children under age 5 are currently waiting to receive financial assistance to enroll in an early childhood program.
- 74% of the students enrolled in the Springfield Public Schools qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Sources:

- US Census
- Massachusetts Office for Child Care Services and Department of Education

MassHealth

Springfield had the highest Medicaid penetration rate among five urban areas surveyed in 2002 by the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy (Springfield, Worcester, Boston, Lawrence/Lowell, Fall River/New Bedford).

Cuts in MassHealth therefore disproportionately impact Springfield.

- Medicaid coverage for insured Springfield residents increased nearly 63% from 2000 to 2002 – from 25.8% to 42%.
- The uninsured rate for children in Springfield jumped 39% from 2000 – 2002, to 5.3% from 3.8%. The uninsured rate for children statewide during that time remained stable.
- In Hampden County, 12% of people are enrolled in MassHealth – 48% are children. This is the highest percentage of children on MassHealth of any county in the Commonwealth. By comparison, Hampshire County has 42%, Franklin has 44% and Berkshire has 43%.

Sources:

- Access Update: Health Insurance Status of Springfield Residents, Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, April 2003
- Cutting Children's Care: How Capped Enrollment and Premiums Have Put Children's Health Care Out of Reach, Children's Health Access Coalition, Health Care for All, December 2003.

MassHealth Dental

Access to dental care for MassHealth members in Hampden County has gotten worse over time. Overall, the ratio in 2002 of eligible members per dentist was 2348 – 1.

- In 2002, there were 68,226 MassHealth-eligible children (under 21 years old) in Hampden County. Of these, 22,620 received dental services, a total of 32.7%. This is consistent with the statewide average. However, in 2003, the number of children receiving dental services dropped to 15,611 or only 23%.
- In 2002, the total ratio of MassHealth members (adults and children) to general dentists for Hampden County was 2348-1. For children only, the ratio was 1049-1.
- Access to dental care for MassHealth members in Hampden County has gotten worse over time:
 - 1996: Springfield 1048-1; Holyoke 1322-1
 - 1998: Springfield 1326-1; Holyoke 2024-1
 - 2002: Hampden County 2348-1

Source: Health Law Advocates, Inc.

CMSP

Of all the children served by CMSP, 1.5% are children from Springfield. Yet Springfield has 3% of the state's population of children under the age of 18.

- In FY04, \$12M was appropriated for CMSP, serving 20,692 children statewide, with a waitlist of 12,328.
- In Springfield, 307 children are served, with 313 on a waitlist.
- In Holyoke, 69 children are served, with 81 on the waitlist.

Sources:

- US Census Data, 2000
- Children's Medical Security Plan, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Healthy Start

*In Hampden County, 115 women were enrolled in Healthy Start in March 2004. By comparison, the program provides services to 4,168 women statewide. **Springfield therefore only receives 2.8% of state Healthy Start funding.***

- In 2001, 60% of Springfield's pregnant women used prenatal care adequately, down from 65% in 1996.
- In 2001, 60% of pregnant women citywide used prenatal care adequately compared to 85% statewide.

Sources:

- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- The Cherish Every Child Initiative, Status Report, Springfield's Children 2003, Data Summary

School Health Services

Springfield has lost 7 state-funded school nurses in the past year. There are currently 31 nurses serving 46 public schools.

- There are currently 31 RNs serving the 30,000 children in Springfield's schools. Of these, 24 are funded by the city, 7 by the state.
- Springfield receives \$305,000 of the \$12.6M appropriated in FY04. This funds 7 nurses: 6 for the 27,000 children in the Springfield Public Schools, and 1 for the 3,000 children in private, charter and parochial schools.
- In FY03, there were 43 RNs serving the school system, with 13 funded by the state. The 50% budget cut from FY03 to FY04 resulted in the loss of 7 state-funded nurses in the public schools.

Source: Springfield Public Schools

Prepared for Cherish Every Child by Strategies for Children, Inc., a non-profit organization specializing in public policy, advocacy and constituency building.