



NEWS RELEASE

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Health coverage has improved in Alabama, but work remains, new study finds

Carnes: Closing coverage gap would insure 300,000+ Alabamians, build on state's coverage gains for children

Alabama has enjoyed great success in recent decades in ensuring that children and seniors have the health protection they need, according to [a new Arise Citizens' Policy Project report issued Tuesday as part of *The State of Working Alabama 2014*](#). But the state lags behind the nation when it comes to insuring young adults, nearly 30 percent of whom lack health coverage.

“Child care, construction and food service are essential jobs that are often low-paying, and the people who do that important work deserve the protection of health insurance,” ACPP policy director Jim Carnes said. “But without an expanded Medicaid program, many working Alabamians fall into a coverage gap. They make too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to be eligible for affordable coverage through the Health Care Marketplace.”

Key findings from the report include:

- Nearly one in seven Alabamians lacked health insurance in 2013.
- Alabama's lower rate of uninsured residents was slightly lower than the national average, almost exclusively as a result of the state's success in providing Medicaid and ALL Kids to low- and moderate-income children.
- The share of working-age adults without health insurance was almost identical in Alabama and the nation, while the rate of young uninsured adults exceeded the national rate.
- Nearly 100,000 Alabamians signed up for Marketplace health coverage in 2014, topping the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' enrollment goal for the state. Open enrollment for 2015 Marketplace coverage began Nov. 15 and continues until Feb. 15, 2015.
- More than 600,000 people in Alabama remain without insurance. Up to 342,000 of them could gain coverage under an expanded Medicaid program.

“We encourage anyone who doesn't have health insurance to visit healthcare.gov and learn about their options,” Carnes said. “The Marketplace makes affordable coverage available for tens of thousands of Alabamians. Closing the coverage gap would insure hundreds of thousands more. It's time for our state to take this important step toward a healthier, more secure Alabama for all.”

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Arise Citizens' Policy Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of 155 congregations and organizations that promote public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians.