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Health Coverage for Adults Continues to Decline in Kentucky, But Increases for Children
Cuts to Key Health Insurance Programs would Cause Kentucky Families More Hardship

Jeffersontown, KY – Over the last decade, the number of uninsured Kentuckians has increased by 3.1 percentage points, which mirrors trends in other states. According to the new Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), roughly 1 in 6, or 17.5 percent of people in Kentucky had no health coverage in 2009 and 2010. Across the country, 18.3 percent of the population lacked health coverage in 2009-2010.

In contrast, government investment in health care through programs like Medicaid and Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program has increased. For instance, the percent of children covered by Medicaid in Kentucky rose 6 percentage points, since 2007-2008, to forty percent, keeping the number of uninsured children low.

"Thousands of Kentuckians and millions more across the nation are struggling just to get by. Our leaders in Frankfort and in Washington must stop using health coverage and other critical supports for struggling families as part of re-election gamesmanship. Deficit-reduction and budget-balancing are vital issues but are not reason enough to slash supports for vulnerable families," said Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates.

Along with health insurance data, the survey also includes some income and poverty data. It shows that the U.S. poverty rate increased from 12.4 percent to 14.7 percent between 2006-2007 and 2009-2010. Kentucky's poverty rate of 17.4 percent did not change significantly since 2006-2007. Because the sample size for state-level poverty and income data is not large enough to provide reliable state sampling, the Census Bureau generally favors the American Community Survey (ACS) data for analysis of state poverty and income, which will be released on September 22.

"While the majority of children in Kentucky have health coverage of some kind, policymakers still have a responsibility to remain vigilant. That focus is especially important in light of the impending changes with the introduction of Medicaid Managed Care into Kentucky. Transparency and rigorous monitoring are critical as these changes can significantly impact families and their health care." added Brooks. "We also have to hold our representatives in Washington accountable for the health challenges

facing our kids. There are numerous threats that could severely curtail health coverage for children including funding cuts and scaling back of services. Despite the successful increase in coverage for our children as seen in today's data, some of Kentucky's federal representatives are among the nation's loudest excuse-makers in justifying cuts to Medicaid and SCHIP. While that D.C. chatter makes for good cable news headlines, it creates a risky future for Kentucky families around both health and economic well-being. "

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Kentucky Youth Advocates *is a non-partisan, non-profit children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*