

PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST *to* KANSAS FAMILIES



What is HealthWave?

HealthWave is the “brand name” Kansas gives to its children’s health insurance program. It includes both children who are eligible for health coverage through Medicaid guidelines, and children who are eligible for health care through federal CHIP guidelines. Currently, Medicaid dollars cover Kansas children living under 100% of poverty while CHIP dollars cover Kansas children living between 100% and 250% of poverty. Nearly 170,000 children have their health insurance through the state’s HealthWave program. Approximately 132,000 of those children are covered through Medicaid dollars, and the remaining 40,000 are covered through CHIP dollars.

What is the federal match?

Federal resources cover 72 percent of the costs for insuring children who are eligible for HealthWave through CHIP guidelines, and federal dollars are provided at the state’s Medicaid matching rate for those children who are eligible under Medicaid guidelines. If the state fails to draw down federal CHIP dollars, we risk losing those dollars to other states, like Iowa, that provide health coverage for more children.

For more than a decade, HealthWave has been an effective and fiscally responsible way to protect the health of our next generation. Lawmakers built the HealthWave program to make sure Kansas kids could get the health care they needed at a price their parents could afford. And, their work has been successful. Today, nearly 40,000 Kansas children who would otherwise be uninsured can count on HealthWave for the care they need to grow and learn. Thanks to the Legislature’s leadership last year, HealthWave will now reach even more uninsured children.

A growing need

As the recession costs a growing number of Kansans their jobs or their employer-sponsored health coverage, more and more Kansas families are turning to HealthWave. In fact, because of the economic downturn, Kansas has seen its rate of uninsured children climb from 51,000 children to 72,000 children in just three years. As working families struggle to make ends meet in a difficult economy, HealthWave provides the security of knowing that a childhood illness or a playground mishap will not drive the family deeper into debt. Providing parents an affordable option for their children’s health insurance has never been so important.

Cost-effective use of state dollars

HealthWave is a cost-effective use of state dollars. In fact, federal resources provide 72 percent of the funding for HealthWave. Combined with monthly premiums paid

by families who enroll their children in the program, the state’s costs to cover a child through HealthWave are minimal.

Short-term and long-term results

By maintaining our investment in HealthWave, we can protect what matters most — both now and for the long haul. In the short-term, Kansas kids can find the preventive care they need to stay healthy and see a doctor when they get sick. In the long-term, we can keep childhood illnesses from becoming costly, life-long medical problems. When we address childhood illnesses early, we can reduce costly emergency department use and hospitalizations and reduce the costs of uncompensated care that affect community hospitals and safety net clinics throughout our state.

Kansas wins with HealthWave

Kansas wins when kids spend less time in the emergency room and more time in the classroom. Kansas wins when federal funding flows into our state and our health care dollars are used wisely on prevention, rather than on expensive hospital care when minor problems go untreated and grow out of control. Kansas wins when parents struggling through the recession can rest a little easier knowing that HealthWave protects what matters most.



720 SW Jackson, Suite 201
Topeka, Kansas 66603
785.232.0550
www.kac.org