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Celebrating 30 years
of child advocacy

**New report shows increase in number
of uninsured kids in Kansas**

**Kansas ranks last in the nation for progress made
in covering children between 2008 and 2010**

TOPEKA – While the nation as a whole made significant progress in reducing the number of uninsured children from 2008 to 2010, the number of children in Kansas who are uninsured actually went up by nearly 8,000, according to a new report released by Kansas Action for Children and authored by the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute’s Center for Children and Families.

Kansas’ rate of uninsured kids was measured at 8.2 percent for 2010, up from 2008, when the rate was 7.4 percent. Over the same period, neighboring states and the country as a whole made significant progress to reduce uninsurance among kids: Nebraska reduced its uninsured rate for kids 1.2 percentage points and Oklahoma decreased its own by 2.4 percentage points. Nationwide, the rate of uninsured children went from 9 percent in 2008 to 8 percent in 2010. With their increases in number of uninsured kids, Kansas and Minnesota tied for 50th place in terms of progress made.

“Kids face many health issues that we can’t do anything about, but making sure they have health insurance is one problem we can help solve,” said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. “KAC has launched a statewide campaign to enroll more children in HealthWave, a program that provides quality, cost-effective health insurance to parents who can’t get or can’t afford private health insurance. Many kids in Kansas are eligible for HealthWave, but their parents may not know it. We aim to change that.”

Analyzing newly available data from the Census Bureau, the Georgetown researchers examined the changes in coverage rates for children from 2008

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through 2010. Over that time period, Kansas saw roughly 7,853 more uninsured children according to the report, which uses data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia reduced their rates of uninsured children over those three years.

While state-specific demographic data are not available, nationally there are some important differences among demographic groups. Hispanic and Native American children remain disproportionately uninsured; older children are less likely to be covered than younger children; and uninsured rates are higher for children living in families earning below 50 percent of the poverty line.

“Kansas has the opportunity to use lessons from other states to help reduce its rate of uninsured kids,” said Joan Alker, co-executive director of the Georgetown Center for Children and Families. “No matter where they live, families that are struggling to meet their children’s health care needs during perilous economic times should get the help they need. Overall, on a national level, these data highlight a rare piece of good news at a challenging time for children – poverty has gone up, but across the county more kids are insured.”

To view the full report, go to <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/index/despite-economic-challenges-progress-continues-children-health>.