

# Snapshots of Innovative Local Programs

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This section provides brief descriptions of innovative local programs to increase health coverage for children, including the two programs presented in this brief. While these programs appear promising, none have been fully evaluated as to their effectiveness at this point in time. Where evaluations are in process, we have indicated the contact information for the evaluator.

## EASTSIDE ACCESS PARTNERSHIP

**Primary focus: Outreach and enrollment in public health insurance**

### Program Description

This university-community partnership focuses on increasing the number of eligible children who are enrolled in MICHild and Healthy Kids using a number of innovative strategies. It has developed strategies to reduce barriers to enrollment identified through community focus groups. They provide education to families on the benefits of health insurance coverage using an interactive learning tool called the Root Learning Map® and enrollment assistance through community based workers. Because poor relationships with local Family Independence Agency (FIA) offices are another perceived barrier to enrollment in Healthy Kids, the project also offers customer service training to local FIA staff.

### Target population

- Primary targets are children and pregnant women who are eligible for MICHild or Healthy Kids Medicaid.
- A secondary target population are FIA Specialists and clerical staff.

### What has been the impact?

Hundreds of children have been enrolled as a result of the project. The staff have also conducted a series of customer service excellence workshops for all FIA staff in two local offices. A formal evaluation of this program and its effectiveness is in process; preliminary results are expected in the Spring of 2004.

For more information:

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## COVERING MICHIGAN'S KIDS

**Primary focus: Outreach and enrollment of children in public health insurance coverage.**

### Program Description

The *Covering Michigan's Kids* program began in 1999 as a three-year demonstration initiative sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The program supports local efforts to identify and enroll hard-to-reach populations of children in public health insurance programs such as Medicaid and *MICHild*. Programs are active in Detroit-Wayne County, Muskegon County, and the Upper Peninsula. Each community identified specific target populations and developed strategies unique to that population. The following snapshot summarizes the three initiatives.

### Muskegon County: Muskegon Community Health Project

#### Who are the target populations?

- Hispanic children
- Children of part-time workers

#### Impact

- Program enrolled 81% of its target population.

## Detroit-Wayne County: Detroit/Wayne County Child Health Care Coalition

### **Who are the target populations?**

- Eligible children of undocumented parents
- High-risk adolescents
- Arab-American children
- Latino families

### **Impact**

- Detroit-Wayne County successfully enrolled 202% of its proposed target population

## The Upper Peninsula (Marquette): Upper Peninsula Coalition

### **Who are the target populations?**

- Native American children
- Homeless youth
- Children of the working poor

### **Impact**

- The Upper Peninsula Coalition enrolled 117% of its proposed target population

## Michigan Covering Kids & Families Initiative

Because *Covering Michigan's Kids* demonstrated effectiveness, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded to the state lead agency, Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI), a new four-year grant entitled *Covering Michigan's Kids and Families*. This grant will expand the program to find and enroll eligible families, simplify enrollment and renewal processes, coordinate health care coverage programs, and involve private and volunteer organizations. The second phase of the initiative will maintain current partnerships as well as expand to additional areas throughout the state.

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## Ingham Health Plan (IHP)

**Primary focus: Health coverage for uninsured low-income children and adults.**

### Program Description

IHP provides health coverage to uninsured individuals in Ingham County with incomes less than 250% of FPL who cannot obtain coverage under Medicaid, Medicare, MICHild, employer-sponsored or other health insurance programs. The program pays for primary care, some specialist visits, outpatient X-rays and laboratory work and prescriptions. It does not pay for inpatient hospital services, substance abuse or mental health services. Families pay \$5 to \$10 per covered service.

### What has been the impact?

- Approximately 100 children are enrolled in the Ingham Health Plan, most of whom are not eligible for Healthy Kids or MICHild due to citizenship status.
- About 15,000 persons are enrolled in the IHP at any given time, representing 55% of the approximately 27,000 uninsured persons in the county.
- In 2002, a total of 1,956 children were seen at the Healthy Smiles Dental Clinic for a total of 4,306 visits.

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## Access Health, Inc., Muskegon, Michigan

**Primary focus: Affordable, workplace-based health coverage for uninsured families.**

### Program description

Access Health provides health coverage to uninsured working families in Muskegon County through a community-based program that utilizes a small business model. It covers a wide range of health services delivered in Muskegon County, including, physician services, inpatient, outpatient and emergency room services, behavioral health, prescription drugs, and lab and x-ray. Access Health also covers pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes.

Costs are shared by the employer, the employee and the community (state and local funds). Premiums for the family are \$46/month for adults and \$29/month for each child. Co-payments for services range from \$10 for a physician office visit and \$5 per prescription to a maximum of \$300 for hospitalization.

### Target population

- Small businesses in Muskegon County with W-2 full-time employees whose average hourly wage is \$11.50 or less and who have not been offered health insurance in the past 12 months.
- Individuals and families who work for eligible businesses and do not have health insurance.

### What has been the impact?

Access Health has been successful in recruiting small businesses, health providers, and uninsured families into the program:

- 420 of the 500 small businesses targeted for inclusion have participated since enrollment began in 1999.
- Both health systems and 97% of area physicians participate in *Access Health*.
- In 2003, Access Health served approximately 1,500 people.

The initiative has targeted four outcomes: (1) reductions in the number of uninsured persons in the community, (2) reductions in employee turnover and absenteeism, (3) reduced need to shift costs of care to charitable care, and (4) improved community health status. Approximately half the participating businesses recently surveyed said the

program improved employee morale and productivity; half also indicated they now are likely to purchase commercial coverage. About one-third said the program improved their profitability and helped them recruit and retain workers.

The Employee Benefits Research Institute is conducting a study of the initiative, including the process by which it was developed and its impact on health care spending in the community. Findings from this study are scheduled to be published in the summer of 2004.

### For more information:

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