



EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
August 9, 2006 – 12:01 a.m. (ET)

Contact: Stephanie Bethel (702) 759-1393
Ariane Holm (571) 213-6465

NUMBER OF UNINSURED KIDS DECLINES AS ENROLLMENT IN NEVADA CHECK UP PROGRAM INCREASES

Report shows decline in number of kids being insured through private coverage

*Back-to-School campaign urges parents to call **1(888) 660-4728** to find out if their uninsured children are eligible*

LAS VEGAS – Even though the total number of Americans without health insurance is on the rise, a new study analyzing government data suggests that the number of uninsured kids, including those in Nevada, is on the decline. According to the study, that decline can be attributed to more kids being covered under public health care programs such as Medicaid and *Nevada Check Up*.

“The State of Kids’ Coverage” was released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to kick off the *Covering Kids & Families* Back-to-School Campaign, a nationwide effort with an intensive focus in Las Vegas to enroll eligible children in Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) during the back-to-school season.

The study shows that the percentage of children who have private health care coverage decreased 5 percent since 1997-98 – meaning that 1.4 million fewer kids have private coverage nationwide -- while the number of kids enrolled in public health coverage programs has increased. In Nevada, the percentage of kids enrolled in Medicaid and *Nevada Check Up* has increased by 76%, providing more than 52,000 more kids with public coverage and demonstrating the importance of public health coverage programs as a safety net for Nevada families.

“Medicaid and *Nevada Check Up* have provided a much-needed safety net for Nevada’s children,” said Lilliam Shell, regional director of Nevada Health Centers. “Because of these programs, working parents don’t have to choose between filling the refrigerator and filling a prescription.”

“We know that children who have health insurance are better prepared to learn in school and better equipped to succeed in life,” said Dr. Donald S. Kwalick, chief health officer of the Southern Nevada Health District. “The back-to-school season is an ideal time to make sure that children have the health coverage they need.”

The latest Census data shows that of the 8.3 million children who remain uninsured nationwide, more than 101,000 live in Nevada. Most of these children are eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage through Medicaid or *Nevada Check Up*, but have not yet enrolled. Nevada families of four earning up to \$40,000 or more may qualify, and parents can call toll-free **1(888) 660-4728** to find out if their children are eligible.

The *Covering Kids & Families* Back-to-School campaign will reach thousands of Nevada families during August and September by:

- Organizing more than 20 local enrollment activities to encourage parents to seek information about enrolling their eligible children in Medicaid or *Nevada Check Up*;
- Purchasing air time in the Las Vegas area for television advertisements;
- Collaborating with the Las Vegas 51's whose team mascot will be attending the health and enrollment fair and giving away tickets to their baseball games;
- Distributing materials to potentially eligible families; and
- Working with coalition partners to promote the **1(888) 660-4728** toll-free number statewide.

Today's report was prepared by analysts at the State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC), located at the University of Minnesota. The report analyzes data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics 2003 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) and the U.S. Census Bureau's 1998, 1999, 2004, and 2005 Current Population Surveys (CPS).

To view the research report, locate *Covering Kids & Families* activities, or download materials in English or Spanish, log on to www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org.

###

Fast Facts:

There are 101,000 uninsured children in Nevada, and most are eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage through Medicaid or *Nevada Check Up*.

Children in a family of four earning up to \$40,000 a year or more may qualify.
Eligibility is based on family size and income.

Parents should call toll-free **1(888) 660-4728**
to find out if their children are eligible.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

The University of Minnesota's State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC) helps states monitor rates of health insurance coverage and to understand factors associated with uninsurance. SHADAC provides targeted policy analysis and technical assistance to states that are conducting their own health insurance surveys and/or using data from national surveys. Information can be located at www.shadac.umn.edu.